# CITY HILIGHTS

The Truth Speaks

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# Historic! India-EU seal 'Mother of All Deals'

The Free Trade Deal unveils strategic shield against global turbulence; PM Modi calls it New Delhi's biggest trade deal ever.

**NEW DELHI**

India and the European Union (EU) on Tuesday finally shook hands on a free trade agreement that had been stuck in negotiations for nearly two decades. The FTA, being called 'Mother of all deals', marks a major moment for India's trade strategy at a time when the global economic order is in flux. The landmark deal will see EU cut tariffs on 99.5% goods traded over seven years, with tariffs to be cut to zero on Indian marine goods, leather and textile products, chemicals, rubber, base metals and gems and jewellery. The deal is expected to double EU exports to India by 2032 by reducing tariffs in 96.6% of traded goods by value, helping the European companies save upto 4 billion euros ($4.75 billion) in duties.

One of the biggest shifts is in automobiles. India is opening up its long protected domestic car industry and has agreed to bring tariffs on European cars down to as low as 10%. This could eventually open the Indian market to brands that were earlier priced out.

The chief executives of Volkswagen, BMW and Mercedes welcomed the trade agreement and described it as a "major opportunity for Germany's export-driven economy".

Terming the deal "extremely important" for Germany, BMW CEO Oliver Zipse said, as per agencies, that the agreement underscored the country's commitment to remaining a strong export nation. "We are very pleased that things are now moving quickly, that we are expanding multilateral relations rather than cutting them off," Zipse said.

For New Delhi, the timing matters with the United States increasingly unpredictable on trade and China flooding global markets with low-cost goods. The India-EU deal offers India a chance to diversify its economic partnerships and secure stable access to the world's largest trading bloc.

## WHAT GETS CHEAPER FOR INDIAN HOUSEHOLDS?

For Indian households, the impact is likely to be felt in everyday purchases. The deal lowers steep duties on European agri-food and consumer goods such as wines, olive oil, breads, chocolates, confectionery and processed food. These products have traditionally carried a heavy price tag in India because of high import taxes.

**List of EU goods that will get tariff cut benefits**

| Product | Current tariffs (%) | Future tariffs (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Wine | 150% | 20% (premium range) 80% (medium range) |
| Spirits | Up to 150% | 40% |
| Beer | 110% | 50% |
| Olive oil, margarine and other vegetable oils | | Up to 45% |
| Kiwis and pears | 33% | 10% in-quota |
| Fruit juices and non-alcoholic beer | Up to 55% | 0% |
| Processed food (breads, pastries, biscuits, pasta, chocolate, pet food) | Up to 50% | 0% |
| Sheep meat | 33% | 0% |
| Sausages and other meat preparations | Up to 110% | 50% |

**List of EU industrial goods that will see a tariff cut**

| PRODUCT | 2024 EXPORTS | CURRENT TARIFFS | FUTURE TARIFFS |
|---|---|---|---|
| Machinery and electrical equipment | €16.3 billion | 44% | 0% for almost all products |
| Aircraft and spacecraft | €6.6 billion | Up to 11% | 0% for almost all products |
| Optical, technical and surgical equipment | €3.4 billion | Up to 27.5% | 0% for almost all products |
| Plastics | €2.2 billion | Up to 16.5% | 0% for almost all products |
| Pearls, precious stones and metals | €2.1 billion | Up to 22.5% | 0% for products of that nature |
| Chemicals | €3.2 billion | Up to 110% | 0% for almost all products |
| Motor vehicles | €1.6 billion | Up to 25% | 10%* |
| Iron and steel | €1.5 billion | Up to 22% | 0% for almost all products |
| Pharmaceuticals | €1.1 billion | Up to 110% | 0% for almost all products |

*Quota of 250k = 2,50,000 vehicles*

**I thank all European leaders: Modi**

After the signing of 'mother of all deals', PM Modi took to X and wrote that the India–EU free trade agreement marks a significant milestone in the relations between Europe and India. "I thank all European leaders over the years for their constructive spirit and commitment, which helped make this possible. This agreement deepens economic ties, creates opportunities for our people, and strengthens the India-Europe partnership for a prosperous future," he posted in Estonian, Dutch and Finnish and French.

**Delivered 'Mother of All' deals with India: EU chief**

**New Delhi:** India-EU Summit LIVE Updates: India and Europe have concluded the "mother of all" trade deals, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said on Tuesday as Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the top EU leadership held summit talks to elevate the two-way ties to jointly navigate geopolitical turbulence and trade disruptions. Prime Minister Modi hosted von der Leyen and European Council President Antonio Costa at the summit. The long-awaited free trade agreement is expected to significantly expand the overall trajectory of two-way engagement, as it will open up new opportunities for cooperation in diverse areas.

## Why is the India-EU FTA crucial?

This trade pact is of major significance as it will impact economies that together represent nearly 2 billion people. The goal is to increase trade between India and the EU at a time when global trade is under pressure, especially due to the US tariffs. India is currently facing 50% tariffs from the US and once the FTA comes into effect, it is expected to help Indian exporters diversify their shipments, and also help reduce the country's dependence on China. So the timing is really crucial for India. The EU had recently suspended the Generalized System of Preferences benefits for India which allowed Indian products to enter Europe at lower taxes. The new FTA is expected to fill that gap and help Indian exporters remain competitive in the European market. Under the deal, both sides plan to lower their import duties.

## CITIZENS BODY URGES PM, CM TO SPEED UP BSRP

**BENGALURU**

A citizens' organisation has urged Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah to personally intervene to expedite Corridor-1 of the Bengaluru Suburban Rail Project (BSRP), citing severe delays.

The BSRP, commissioned in 2020, aims to connect Bengaluru with its suburbs and satellite towns through dedicated rail corridors, similar to suburban rail systems in Mumbai, Chennai and Kolkata. The project, estimated to cost Rs 15,767 crore, was originally scheduled for completion by December 2025. However, the Rail Infrastructure Development Company (Karnataka) (K-RIDE) has now revised the deadline to March 2030.

Citizens for Citizens (C4C) said the delay is most alarming in Corridor-1, the Majestic–KIA stretch, which is considered the most critical corridor and is expected to benefit nearly two crore people. In a letter to Modi and Siddaramaiah, C4C founder Rajkumar Dugar noted that despite the Karnataka government holding a 51% stake in K-RIDE, the project has fallen far behind schedule.

The group recalled that when BSRP was sanctioned in October 2020, Corridor-1 was prioritised for completion within 36 months, a plan endorsed by the Directorate of Urban Land Transport. However, even 63 months after sanction, no on-ground work has begun. The latest completion target of March 2030 would mean the corridor takes 113 months to finish, nearly triple the original timeline.

C4C has sought strong budgetary allocation, faster land acquisition and directions to complete Corridor-1 within 24 months, expressing confidence that commissioning by January 2028 is achievable with direct intervention.

## Cong holds 'Lok Bhavan Chalo' for roll back of VB-G-RAM-G Act

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## 'Trying to defame Dalit minister': DKS on excise scam

**BENGALURU:** Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar on Tuesday dimissed demands for the resignation of state Excise Minister Ramappa Timmapur made by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) that alleged "scam involving more than Rs 6,000 crore", saying that the opposition party in the state was trying to defame a Dalit minister.

"It is all bogus. Nothing is there. What they are telling is politically motivated. They are just trying to defame a Dalit Minister. That's all," Shivakumar told reporters here.

## Labour Dept forms gig workers' welfare board

**BENGALURU**

The Karnataka Labour Department on Tuesday formed a 16-member welfare board to provide social security for gig workers, making way for aggregators to deposit their share of welfare fee with the board. All aggregators will have to pay a welfare fee in the range of 1-1.5%. The Karnataka Platform-based Gig Workers Welfare Board is being set up as mandated in the Karnataka Platform-based Gig Workers' (Social Security and Welfare) Act, 2025. The board comprises five members from the government - Labour Minister (currently Santosh Lad) will be the ex-officio chairperson, senior officials of Labour, IT and Commercial Taxes Departments, and Chief Executive Officer of the Board, who will be the ex-officio member secretary.

**SC CRACKS THE WHIP**

## *SC calls for harsher approach in acid attack cases*

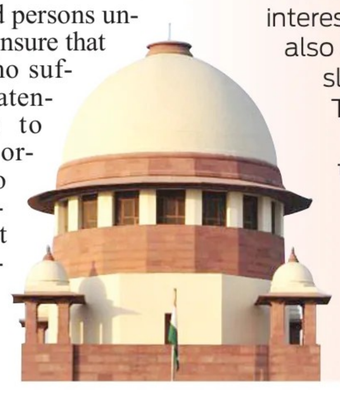
**NEW DELHI**

Taking strong note of acid attack cases, the Supreme Court on Tuesday asked all states and Union territories to provide a slew of information, including the year-wise details of the number of such cases and their status in courts, besides the rehabilitation measures to support the victims.

A bench comprising Chief Justice Surya Kant and Justices R Mahadevan and Joymalya Bagchi asked states and UTs to provide information about the number of cases in which charge sheets are filed in trial courts. They will also have to provide information about the number of cases decided or pending at the trial court levels.

Seeking the details in four weeks, the bench asked them to also provide information about the number of appeals filed in appellate courts, including the high courts, in such cases. The bench asked them to also provide brief particulars of each victim, her academic qualification, employment and marital status and the medical treatment and the expenses incurred or to be incurred. It also asked states and UTs to provide details about the rehabilitation scheme for such victims.

The bench also asked them to provide details of the cases where victims are forced to ingest acid. The CJI asked the Centre to mull changes in law to ensure that convicts are awarded "extraordinary" punishment for indulging in acid attacks. The bench was hearing a PIL filed by Shaheen Malik, who herself is an acid attack survivor. Malik is seeking expansion of the definition of disabled persons under the law to ensure that the victims who suffered life-threatening damages to their internal organs due to forced ingestion of acid get adequate compensation and other reliefs, including medical care.



## Unrequited love: Girl hospitalised after acid attack; relative held

**East Champaran:** A young woman suffered severe burns after an acid attack in Bihar's East Champaran district, allegedly carried out by a distant relative who had been harassing her over a one-sided romantic interest. The attack, which took place late at night, also left the woman's mother injured, as she was sleeping beside her at the time of the assault. The accused, Priyanshu Kumar, allegedly entered the house, switched off the lights and threw acid on the woman's face before fleeing. Her screams alerted family members, who rushed her to a private hospital, where she is undergoing treatment. Doctors treating the victim informed the Chhauni police station, prompting an immediate response.

## Only Mamata truly countering BJP in India: Akhilesh

**KOLKATA**

Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav on Tuesday hailed West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee as the only opposition leader in entire India who is "effectively countering the BJP", and said that the saffron camp is now aiming for a "respectable defeat" in the upcoming state elections. Yadav, accompanied by his party's senior leader Kiranmoy Nanda, met Banerjee at the state secretariat Nabanna amid a charged political atmosphere in the poll-bound state over the controversial SIR exercise, and lauded the TMC supremo for her "courage in countering the BJP's onslaughts".

"If in the entire country, someone is effectively countering the BJP, it is West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee. And the BJP can only be truly opposed by the way she is doing it," the former Uttar Pradesh CM told reporters after the meeting, which lasted for about 40 minutes, with Banerjee standing next to him.

## QUICK READ

### Interaction with Central Cooperation Minister

**BENGALURU**

The CEO of Hoskote Town Multipurpose Primary Agricultural Cooperation Society S Narayana Sharma who was selected by Central government to participate in the Republic Day function at Red Fort, New Delhi, interacted with Central Minister of State for Cooperation Muralidhar Mohol. Narayana Sharma was among the 13 Primary Agricultural Cooperative society of state who have been selected. The Minister congratulated the delegation for their achievements.

### Ticketless travel, BMTC collects Rs 6.5L fine in Dec

BENGALURU

Line-checking officials of Bengaluru Metropolitan Transport Corporation (BMTC) imposed penalties totalling Rs 6.3 lakh on passengers travelling without tickets on city buses in December. During the month, inspection squads checked over 18,400 bus trips and detected 2,801 passengers without valid tickets. Cases were also registered against 1,748 conductors for various lapses. Officials additionally fined 250 male passengers for occupying seats reserved for women, collecting Rs 25,000 under sections 177 and 94 of the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988. In all, BMTC collected Rs 6,59,865 in fines from 3,051 passengers across the city during December 2025. In a press release, BMTC urged passengers to carry valid tickets, day passes or monthly passes while travelling on its buses to avoid penalties.

### TT vehicle overturns, passengers escape unhurt

**BENGALURU**

In a shocking incident, a TT vehicle overturned on a gravel scattered on the road and the TT vehicle overturned on a CCTV camera. The incident took place near Gerahalli village in Nelamangala taluk and 12 people in the Tempo Traveler vehicle miraculously escaped. The driver, Yatish, sustained minor injuries and is undergoing treatment at a local hospital. A case has been registered at Nelamangala Rural police station.

# 4 out of 5 civic bodies seek Rs 6,600 cr budgetary support

City corporations will table their budgets only after state govt presents its own; all five have invited suggestions from citizens and resident welfare associations.

**BENGALURU**

The first independent budgets submitted by four of the five new city corporations of Bengaluru to the state government see the civic bodies mapping their financial needs and prioritising development.

In their budgets submitted to the state's Finance Commissioner, the Bengaluru Central City Corporation (BCCC) sought a grant of Rs 2,047 crore, East - Rs 1,685 crore, South -Rs 1,675 crore, and North - Rs 1,210 crore.

This clearly indicated that the newly-formed corporations will continue to rely heavily on state government support in their initial years. The West city corporation is also expected to place a similar demand as its budgeting process gathers momentum.

Maheshwar Rao, Chief Commissioner of Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) said, the budgetary exercise is being positioned as a shift towards decentralised urban governance. As part of their preparations, all five corporations invited suggestions from citizens, resident welfare associations, and organisations before framing their 2026–27 budgets.

According to officials involved in the process, the focus is on identifying local priorities in areas such as infrastructure, public health, safety, environmental protection, and social welfare.

Rajendra Cholan, Commissioner, Central corporation, said, our primary focus is the development of basic infrastructure in and around the central business district, for which about Rs 500 crore is proposed to be earmarked. About Rs 200 crore is proposed to be allocated for the development of basic infrastructure in slums, and the rest of the amount for solid waste management, lakes and horticulture, among others.

In North corporation, about Rs 500 crore is needed for major drain works, and Rs 500 crore for the construction of new roads. There is a special need of Rs 25 crore for the relocation of stray dogs, as the huge population of such canines is in our jurisdiction, said Pommala Sunil Kumar, commissioner, North corporation.

In South corporation, the major focus is on parks, roads, and waste management. Last year, GBA's predecessor BBMP presented a budget of Rs 19,930 crore. The allocation was later increased to Rs 20,440 crore in the revised estimate.

The state government released substantial grants for city development, enabling the rollout of large projects such as tunnel roads, white-topping, elevated corridors, flyovers, and the development of stormwater drains. A dedicated agency, B-Smile, was also set up to handle the implementation and maintenance of these mega projects, Rao told.

# GBA oversight panel set up, but move casts doubts on new corporations' autonomy

**BENGALURU**

The state government has constituted a new empowered panel under the Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) to oversee development works in the city and ensure effective implementation of projects undertaken by the five newly formed municipal corporations.

However, the move has raised questions about possible infringement on the autonomy of the new civic bodies. The panel was approved by the cabinet earlier this month, following the cessation of BBMP and the split of the city's civic administration into five corporations.

With the restructuring, the govt cited the presence of multiple committees, independent agencies and the absence of a single oversight mechanism for development works across Bengaluru. While GBA, chaired ex officio by the chief minister, has been vested with powers for overall planning and coordination, the newly constituted panel has been tasked with handling day-to-day affairs, including inspection, supervision and approval of tenders.

This includes projects taken up by the five corporations as well as independent agencies operating across the city. Two major agencies functioning outside the jurisdiction of the five corporations are Bengaluru Solid Waste Management Limited (BSWML), responsible for lifting and disposal of all types of solid waste generated in the city, and Bengaluru Smart Infrastructure (B-Smile), which handles large-scale infrastructure projects.

A govt note justifying the panel stated, in the backdrop of all these developments, it is felt necessary to revise the empowered committee constituted under the chairmanship of the additional chief secretary to the govt, urban development department... to carry out inspection and supervision and to accord approvals to all types of tenders with regard to work/ projects implemented under the state and central govt grants, state and central finance commission grants, own funds and other grants by five corporations, B-Smile and BSWML coming under the jurisdiction of GBA.

The panel has been described as a mechanism to enable speedy implementation of projects and works keeping with the vast scope and complex system of Bengaluru.The empowered committee will have 23 members, including the commissioners and chief engineers of the new corporations. It will also include the chief engineers of GBA, managing directors of BSWML and B-Smile, public works department secretary, finance (expenditure) secretary and other senior officials.

The committee will oversee tenders called for projects across Bengaluru. However, the govt has not clarified whether the panel's role will overlap with or influence the independent functioning of the five corporations and the decisions taken by their elected political heads.

GBA House Committee chairperson Rizwan Arshad maintained that the autonomy of the corporations cannot be diluted.

# 'ELCITA is public authority liable to disclose info'

**BENGALURU**

In a significant ruling strengthening transparency in urban governance, the Karnataka State Information Commission (KSIC) held that the Electronics City Industrial Township Authority (ELCITA) is a public authority under the Right to Information (RTI) Act, 2005, and is therefore bound to disclose information sought under the law. It directed ELCITA to appoint a public information officer, an assistant public information officer, and a first appellate authority as mandated under the Act.

The commission, while hearing an appeal by M Ganesh Kumar, a resident of Doddathoguru, traced the origin of Electronics City to 1970, when the state government established it to promote electronic industries.

Spread over more than 900 acres now, the area was developed by the Karnataka State Electronics Development Corporation (KEONICS), which handed over its management to ELCITA in 1997. However, the commission noted that governance of the township rests with ELCITA, a statutory body constituted under the Karnataka Municipalities Act, 1964, through a govt notification issued in March 2013.The commission observed that ELCITA performs core municipal and governmental functions, including the provision of roads, water supply, sanitation, and the collection of property taxes. State Information Commissioner Rudranna Harthikote ruled that ELCITA is a self-governing statutory authority exercising municipal powers, even though it does not have an elected body.

# Flower expo on Tejaswi's life earns Rs 2.85 cr

**BENGALURU**

The flower exhibition, which was held at the Lalbagh Glass House from January 15 on the occasion of Republic Day, was opened on Monday and was viewed by a total of 8.10 lakh people, including children.

Officials from the Horticulture Department have informed that a total of Rs 2.74 crore has been collected, including Rs 2.46 lakh from entry to Lalbagh to view the flower exhibition and Rs 28 lakh from various stalls set up at the exhibition.

Viewed by 2.93 lakh children: The Phalapushpa exhibition on Tejaswi's life was viewed by 85 thousand children, including 2.08 lakh school children, and 2.93 lakh children viewed the exhibition, thereby making an effort to develop children's awareness of Kannada literature and scientific thinking.

**2.08 lakh school children participated in the flower show on Tejaswi's life and 2.93 lakh children watched the show.**

13 thousand books sold: Tejaswi, who was also a scientific writer, has written many books. The novel Karvolo, written on the back of a flying fox, has a scientific basis. The books Abachurina Post Office, Tabarana Kathe and Kirugurin Gayyaaligalu have been made into films. Thousands of Kannada literature lovers and film lovers had come to the exhibition on Tejaswi. As a result, his books were sold at the exhibition.

More than 3200 copies of Tejaswi's science fiction novel Karvolo have been sold in a single book, and it was out of stock for the last two days. Many people returned home empty-handed after reading the Karvolo book, Dr. M. Jagadish, Additional Director, Horticulture Department, informed ETV India.

2 tons of garbage collected : A complete ban was imposed on the use of plastic in the current season's flower show. Paper bags, banana leaves, and areca strips were also used in the stalls. Due to this, only organic waste was found in the park, and more than 2 tons of waste was collected. He explained that if this waste is mixed with soil, it will be converted into fertilizer and can be used in the park.

On Monday, the final day of the flower and flower exhibition on Tejaswi, Kuvempu's daughter Tarani and son-in-law Chidananda Gowda, second daughter Indukala's daughter, Tejaswi's KP Susmita and KP Ishanye couple and children viewed the area with their families.

# Free parking for cycles in 9 metro stations

**BENGALURU**

To promote cycling as a last-mile option to Metro stations, Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation Ltd (BMRCL) has decided to offer free bicycle parking at nine stations across the city, two on the Purple Line, three on Green Line, and four on the newly commissioned Yellow Line.

The waiver was announced through a recent tender floated by BMRCL for operating parking facilities. Bids can be submitted until Feb 9, after which the agency is expected to finalise an operator.

At present, cyclists are charged Rs 1 an hour for parking at Metro stations, with a maximum daily fee of Rs 10. Our connectivity team identified these stations as the ones most frequently used by cyclists, which is why they have been chosen for free bicycle parking, a BMRCL official said.

The waiver, the official clarified, will apply only to these nine stations for now, and parking charges will continue at all other stations.

While BMRCL believes the move will send a positive signal to commuters, cyclists say improving infrastructure at Metro stations is equally important. I don't mind paying even Rs 10 to park my bicycle; it's not about the fee, said Sathya Sankaran, popularly known as Bengaluru's bicycle Mayor. Except for a few stations, there is no dedicated space for bicycles, and at many places cyclists are shooed away. Providing proper parking facilities at all stations is the real way to promote cycling as a last-mile option, he said.

Another regular cyclist, Biju Cherayath, welcomed the initiative but highlighted the lack of basic infrastructure such as anchoring points. Most cyclists don't mind paying as long as their bicycles are secure, he said.

At several stations, there is no pole or bar to lock the cycle. Even simple support structures would make a big difference.

**Dr SUSHILAMMA, THE ROLE MODEL**

# *The path to Padma Shri: All began with just Rs 15!*

**BENGALURU**

It was a time. I had only 15 rupees in my hand. I had no building of my own, no resources, no hopes. All I had in mind was the welfare of the poor, orphans, homeless children, providing education to the underprivileged children and providing them with an opportunity to live with dignity. Dr SG Sushilamma's 50-year journey of social service, which began with this vision in 1975, has now been awarded the Padma Shri.

When I got the message that I had been awarded the Padma Shri, I couldn't believe it at first. It took us by surprise for a few moments. But then I was happy to know that this award was a recognition of the social service we were doing. Our social service began quietly without any expectation of money, plans or recognition. We didn't expect anything, said Dr SG Sushilamma.

Recalling her career of service that began with just three children and has spanned nearly five decades, Sushilamma said, This honour has further increased our responsibility. Now people expect even more service from us. We must continue our work with the same sincerity."

We started Seva Ashram in 1975 with just 15 rupees for the poor, orphans, homeless children and women of the country. Over the years, the name of the organization became well-known. It can be said to be a miracle of sorts. Because we did not have any money or property. We started providing services with the money we received like pouring water from a lake into a lake.

What started with just three children gradually grew into a large ashram and social organization. We carried out dozens of service works through the ashram, including running primary health centers, implementing housing projects, and promoting environmental sustainability. Like a divine miracle, in a short period of time we received support from the public, dozens of private organizations, and many companies, including the state and central governments. This further increased the interest in service. The ashram helped expand its activities beyond shelter to education, health, and livelihood support, she explained.

My desire is to continue this journey of service with the same honesty, dedication and compassion as it began 50 years ago. This award has increased our responsibility, she said.

# Man kills brother for insurance money: High Court upholds life sentence

**BENGALURU**

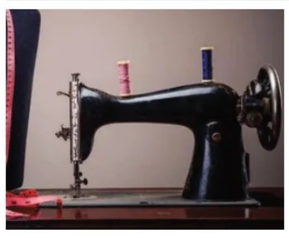
The High Court has upheld the life sentence awarded by the trial court to the accused who, out of greed for a large sum of money, had taken out an insurance policy worth Rs 45 lakh in his brother's name, paid the outstanding insurance premiums and then committed murder, and then burnt the body in a fire contrary to tradition to destroy evidence.

The order was passed by a bench of Justices HP Sandesh and T Venkatesh Naik, who were hearing a petition filed by the deceased's brother, Amatekoppada Kumar of Shikaripura taluk, challenging the life sentence awarded by the trial court.

The petitioner, accused Kumar, brought his younger brother Umesh, the deceased Umesh, who was disabled, to his mother-in-law's house, promising to take care of him. He obtained the deceased's Aadhaar card and voter ID card. Although he had taken out an insurance policy of Rs 20 lakh in the name of the deceased in 2012, it had not been paid after one instalment. However, the accused himself paid all the outstanding instalments four months before his death.

He also took out another insurance policy in the name of the deceased and opened an account in a bank. All this process was carried out in the first week of January, and the murder took place four months later.

QUICK READ



## Tailor Reported Missing from Shah Bazar Area in City

**KALABURAGI**

A man engaged in tailoring work in the Shah Bazar locality of the city has been reported missing, causing concern among family members, neighbours, and local residents. The missing person, who earned his livelihood as a tailor in the area, was last seen a few days ago, after which his whereabouts remain unknown. According to police sources, the tailor left his residence as usual, informing family members that he was going to attend to routine work. However, he did not return home later in the day. When repeated attempts to contact him over the phone failed, family members began searching for him among relatives, friends, and acquaintances in nearby areas.

## Elderly Woman Dies by Suicide in Om Nagar Area

**KALABURAGI**

A tragic incident was reported from the Om Nagar locality of Kalaburagi city, where an elderly woman allegedly died by suicide after being unable to bear persistent abdominal pain. The incident has shocked local residents and once again drawn attention to the challenges faced by elderly people suffering from prolonged health issues. According to police sources, the woman had been complaining of severe stomach pain for the past few days. Family members stated that despite treatment and medication, her condition did not show significant improvement. On the day of the incident, her pain reportedly worsened, causing extreme discomfort and distress. The incident came to light when family members found the woman unresponsive at her residence and immediately alerted neighbours and the police.

## Priyank Kharge Unveils 'Kalaburagi Next' Logo at Just Club

**KALABURAGI**

In a significant step towards projecting Kalaburagi's future growth and development, Priyank Kharge unveiled the official logo of the Kalaburagi Next initiative at the city's Just Club. The event was attended by public representatives, industry stakeholders, youth leaders, and members of civil society. Speaking after unveiling the logo, the minister said that Kalaburagi Next represents a forward-looking vision aimed at transforming the city into a hub for innovation, investment, education, and employment. He emphasised that the initiative is designed to showcase Kalaburagi's potential while creating new opportunities for the younger generation.

# Police Raid Illegal Gambling Den Near Kadanala Village, Seven Arrested

Police in Kalaburagi cracked down on illegal gambling near Kadanala village, arresting seven suspects during overnight raids yesterday

**KALABURAGI**

Kalaburagi police intensified their crackdown on unlawful activities by raiding an illegal gambling den operating near Kadanala village, leading to the arrest of seven individuals. The operation was carried out following specific intelligence inputs that an ispeet (card gambling) racket was being run discreetly in the area, drawing participants from nearby villages and towns.

According to police officials, the raid was conducted by a special team from the local police station, which reached the spot late in the evening. On noticing the police presence, some gamblers attempted to flee, but officers swiftly cordoned off the area and managed to detain seven persons involved in the activity. The accused were found actively engaged in gambling using playing cards, with cash scattered at the site.

During the operation, the police seized a sum of money allegedly used for betting, along with playing cards and other materials linked to the gambling activity. Preliminary investigations revealed that the gambling den had been operating for some time and was attracting frequent participants, causing concern among local residents.

Police sources stated that such illegal gambling activities not only violate the law but also disturb public order and often lead to other criminal activities. We have received multiple complaints from villagers about gambling dens functioning secretly in rural pockets. Strict action will continue against those involved, a senior police officer said. The arrested individuals have been booked under relevant sections of the law related to illegal gambling. They were later produced before a magistrate, and further investigation is underway to identify whether more people are involved in organising or financing the gambling operation.

Residents of Kadanala village welcomed the police action, stating that gambling had been creating social issues and financial distress for several families. Police have urged the public to cooperate by sharing information about illegal activities and assured that such inputs will be kept confidential.

## Multi-Department Campaign Launched in City

**KALABURAGI**

A comprehensive campaign to stop child marriages has been launched in the city by various government departments, aiming to create widespread awareness and ensure strict enforcement of existing laws. The initiative brings together officials from the Women and Child Development Department, Education Department, Police, Health Department, and local administration, reflecting a coordinated approach to address the social issue. As part of the campaign, awareness programmes are being conducted in schools, colleges, anganwadi centres, and densely populated residential areas. Officials are educating parents, guardians, and community leaders about the legal consequences of child marriage and the long-term impact it has on children, particularly girls. Pamphlets, posters, and street plays are being used to effectively communicate messages to the public in a simple and relatable manner.

Speaking on the occasion, officials from the Women and Child Development Department said that child marriage remains a concern in certain areas despite legal prohibitions. Early marriage affects children's education, health, and overall development. Through this campaign, we aim to involve the entire community in preventing such practices, an official stated.

The Police Department is also playing a key role by increasing surveillance during wedding seasons and responding promptly to information related to suspected child marriages. Police officials urged citizens to report any such incidents immediately, assuring that the identity of informants would be kept confidential.

Health department officials highlighted the serious health risks associated with early marriage and early pregnancy.

# Bank Employees Protest Demanding Five-Day Work Week Policy

**KALABURAGI**

Kalaburagi witnessed a significant protest as bank employees from various public and private sector banks gathered in the city, demanding the implementation of a five-day working week. The demonstration was held as part of a nationwide call by bank employees' unions, highlighting long-pending demands related to work-life balance and employee welfare.Carrying placards and raising slogans, the protesting staff urged the central government and banking authorities to immediately notify and enforce a uniform five-day work schedule for banks. At present, most banks function six days a week, with employees claiming that extended working hours and weekend duties have adversely affected their personal lives, mental health, and overall efficiency.

Speaking at the protest, union leaders said the banking sector has undergone significant changes in recent years, including increased workloads due to digital banking, staff shortages, and rising customer expectations. Despite technological advancements, the pressure on employees has only increased. A five-day work week is essential to ensure better productivity and employee well-being, a union representative stated.

The protesters pointed out that several government departments and corporate sectors already follow a five-day work system, and banks should not be an exception. They also argued that customer services would not be affected, as improved efficiency and planned operations could compensate for reduced working days.

In addition to the five-day work week, bank employees also raised concerns over inadequate staffing, frequent transfers, and mounting operational stress. They warned that if their demands are not addressed, the agitation could be intensified in the coming days, including strikes and larger demonstrations.

**Bank employees in Kalaburagi staged a protest demanding implementation of a five-day work week policy across the city.**

Customers visiting banks during the protest faced minor inconvenience, as some branches operated with limited staff. However, essential services were largely maintained, and union leaders said care was taken to ensure that public inconvenience was kept to a minimum.

Local residents expressed mixed reactions to the protest. While some customers sympathised with the employees' demands for better working conditions, others urged authorities to find a balanced solution that safeguards both employee welfare and uninterrupted banking services.

## Protest Held Demanding Increase in Pension Amounts

**KALABURAGI**

Kalaburagi city witnessed a protest on Wednesday as pension beneficiaries gathered to demand an increase in the monthly pension provided under various social security schemes. The demonstration was organised by pensioners and members of social organisations, who alleged that the current pension amounts are insufficient to meet rising living expenses.

Carrying placards and raising slogans, the protesters assembled at a prominent location in the city and urged the state government to revise pension amounts at the earliest. They stated that pensions provided to senior citizens, widows, persons with disabilities, and other vulnerable sections have remained low despite sharp increases in the cost of essential commodities, healthcare, and utilities.

Speaking at the protest, representatives of pensioners' associations said that many beneficiaries depend entirely on pension income for their daily needs. With the continuous rise in prices of food, medicines, and rent, it has become extremely difficult to survive on the existing pension. The government must consider a substantial hike, a protest leader said. The protesters also pointed out that delays in pension disbursement have added to their hardship. They demanded timely and regular payment along with an increase in the amount. Some beneficiaries shared personal experiences, stating that they often have to borrow money for medical treatment and household expenses due to inadequate financial support.

The demonstration remained peaceful, with police personnel deployed at the site to ensure law and order.

## Surya Narayana Swamy Vardhantotsava Celebrated with Devotion and Grandeur

**KALABURAGI**

The city witnessed a spiritually vibrant atmosphere on Tuesday as the Vardhantotsava (anniversary celebration) of Surya Narayana Swamy was observed with great devotion and traditional rituals. Devotees from different parts of the city gathered at the temple from the early hours of the morning to take part in the special religious programmes organised on the occasion. The celebrations began with elaborate poojas and abhisheka performed by temple priests amid the chanting of Vedic hymns. Special prayers were offered to Lord Surya Narayana Swamy seeking blessings for good health, prosperity, and harmony in society. The temple premises were beautifully decorated with flowers, mango leaves, and rangoli, adding to the festive spirit. As part of the Vardhantotsava, a series of religious rituals including homa, archana, and maha mangalarathi were conducted. Devotees stood in long queues to have darshan of the deity and participate in the rituals. Many families offered special prayers, expressing faith in Lord Surya Narayana Swamy, who is revered as the source of energy, life, and positivity.

## Bike Stolen Outside Sana Hotel in Mehboob Nagar Area

**KALABURAGI**

A case of bike theft has been reported from Kalaburagi city after an unidentified person stole a motorcycle parked in front of Sana Hotel in the Mehboob Nagar area. The incident has raised concerns among residents and vehicle owners about the growing incidents of theft in busy commercial and residential localities of the city.

According to police sources, the bike owner had parked the two-wheeler in front of the hotel and went about his work, assuming it would be safe in the crowded area. However, when he returned after some time, he found that the motorcycle was missing. After searching the surrounding area and enquiring with nearby shopkeepers yielded no results, the owner approached the police and lodged a complaint.

Police have registered a case and launched an investigation into the incident. Officers visited the spot and collected preliminary information, including checking whether any CCTV cameras installed near the hotel or nearby establishments captured footage of the theft. Initial investigations suggest that the theft may have occurred swiftly, indicating the involvement of experienced bike thieves.

Residents and business owners in the Mehboob Nagar area expressed concern over the incident, stating that despite the area being busy during most hours of the day, incidents of theft have been increasing. Some locals pointed out that lack of adequate parking facilities and insufficient surveillance make parked vehicles vulnerable to theft.

A police official said that bike theft cases often increase when owners fail to use proper safety measures. Vehicle owners are advised to use steering locks, additional security locks, and avoid parking in isolated or poorly monitored places. We are analysing CCTV footage and hope to identify the accused soon, the official said.

Police have appealed to the public to remain vigilant and immediately inform authorities if they notice any suspicious activity.

They also urged hotel managements, shop owners, and residents to install and maintain functional CCTV cameras to help deter crime and assist investigations.

HODAL NREGA PROTEST

# *Hodal Villagers Protest Demanding Employment Under NREGA Scheme*

**KALABURAGI**

Kalaburagi city witnessed a protest on Tuesday as residents of Hodal village gathered to demand assured employment under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA). The villagers alleged that despite repeated applications and requests, they have not been provided with sufficient work under the scheme, causing severe financial hardship for many families. Carrying placards and raising slogans, the protesters assembled at a prominent location in the city and urged the district administration to intervene immediately. They claimed that NREGA, which is meant to guarantee at least 100 days of wage employment to rural households, has not been implemented effectively in their village. As a result, many daily wage earners are struggling to meet basic needs.

Speaking to the media, villagers said several families in Hodal depend entirely on NREGA work, especially during the agricultural off-season. We have job cards, but no work is being allotted. When work is given, it is irregular and lasts only for a few days, a protester said. Others complained of delays in wage payments, adding to their distress.

The protesters also alleged that despite the availability of pending development works such as road repairs, desilting of water bodies, and land development, job opportunities are not being generated. They demanded transparency in the allocation of work and proper utilisation of funds sanctioned under the scheme.

Protest leaders warned that if their demands are ignored, the agitation would be intensified in the coming days, possibly by staging sit-ins or approaching higher authorities. They submitted a memorandum to district officials, seeking immediate action to ensure continuous employment and timely wage payments.

District administration officials met a delegation of protesters and assured them that the grievances would be examined. An official stated that instructions would be issued to the concerned departments and gram panchayat to review the status of NREGA works in Hodal village. If there are lapses in implementation, corrective measures will be taken, the official said.

## QUICK READ

### Woman Voices Anger Over Easy Availability of Liquor in Rural Areas

**RAICHUR**

A sharp criticism of the prevailing social conditions in rural areas came to the fore when a woman in Raichur openly expressed her anger over the easy availability of liquor in villages, while basic necessities remain uncertain. Her remark in rural areas, you never know whether you'll get tea in the morning, but liquor is always available has sparked discussion on social priorities and governance lapses. Speaking during a public interaction in the district, the woman highlighted the everyday struggles faced by rural families, especially women. She said that while access to basic amenities such as clean drinking water, healthcare facilitie.

### Special Panchamrita Abhisheka Performed to Pranadevaru

**RAICHUR**

Madhva Navami, marking the sacred occasion associated with the Dvaita philosophy tradition, was observed with great devotion and spiritual enthusiasm at Mantralaya, where a special Panchamrita Abhisheka was performed to Pranadevaru. Devotees from Raichuru district and neighbouring regions gathered in large numbers to take part in the religious celebrations and seek blessings. On the occasion, priests conducted elaborate rituals in accordance with traditional customs. The special Panchamrita Abhisheka was performed using milk, curd, ghee, honey and sugar, accompanied by the chanting of Vedic hymns and devotional songs.

### BJP Yuva Morcha Stages Protest at Ambedkar Circle

**RAICHUR**

Members of the Bharatiya Janata Party Yuva Morcha staged a protest at Ambedkar Circle in Raichur on Tuesday, demanding the resignation of senior Congress leader B.K. Hariprasad over his recent statements and alleged remarks, which the protesters termed as irresponsible and objectionable. Raising slogans and holding placards, the demonstrators accused Hariprasad of making comments that, according to them, hurt public sentiments and undermined democratic values. The protest was led by local leaders of the BJP Yuva Morcha, who said such statements from senior political leaders were unacceptable and warranted immediate accountability. Speaking to the media, Yuva Morcha leaders said Hariprasad's remarks had created unnecessary controversy and reflected a disregard for public responsibility.

# Education Key to Social Progress, Says Additional Deputy Commissioner

Additional Deputy Commissioner B.T. Kumaraswamy highlighted education as the strongest driver of Savita community upliftment calling upon parents to prioritise higher education

**CHITRADURGA**

Additional Deputy Commissioner B.T. Kumaraswamy on Tuesday emphasised that education remains the most powerful tool for the social and economic upliftment of the Savita community, calling upon parents to prioritise higher education for their children. Speaking at a programme organised in the Deputy Commissioner's office auditorium to mark Savita Maharshi Jayanti, he said that although the Savita community may be economically and socially backward, sustained progress is possible only through education and modern thinking.

After offering floral tributes to the portrait of Savita Maharshi, Kumaraswamy urged families to ensure that their children pursue studies at least up to the degree level. He advised the community to fully utilise government facilities such as scholarships, hostel accommodations and reservation benefits to access quality education.

Stressing the importance of dignity of labour, he said there should be no inferiority complex associated with traditional occupations, but professionalism and innovation must be introduced to transform them into successful enterprises.

Kumaraswamy highlighted that the Savita community is not merely a social group but a collective of hardworking individuals who contribute beauty, hygiene and discipline to society. By adopting modern technology, innovative styles and entrepreneurial approaches, he said, youth from the community should aim to generate employment for others and achieve financial self-reliance. He further appealed to members of the community to take advantage of various government loan schemes and welfare programmes to strengthen their economic standing and integrate into the social mainstream.

Kannada Sampige daily editor T. Tippeswamy, delivering the keynote address, described the Savita community's service as sacred and deeply embedded in human life. He noted that the community's role spans the three major stages of life birth, marriage and death, making its contribution indispensable. From rituals associated with a child's early life to final rites that symbolise the journey towards liberation, the services of the Savita community remain integral, he said.

# District-Level State Government Employees Sports Meet to Be Held

**CHITRADURGA**

The district-level State Government Employees Sports Meet and Cultural Competitions for the year 2025–26 will be organised on January 29 and 30 at the Veeravanite Onake Obavva Sports Stadium in the city. The two-day event is being jointly organised by the District Administration, Zilla Panchayat, Youth Empowerment and Sports Department, and the Karnataka State Government Employees Association.

Providing details at a press conference held at the city press club on Tuesday, Karnataka State Government Employees Association district president Malatesh Muddajji said the annual sports and cultural meet aims to promote physical fitness, cultural bonding and unity among government employees across the district. He said this year the registration process has been made completely online, and only those who have registered online will be allowed to participate in the competitions. Muddajji informed that around 2,045 government employees have already registered online to take part in various sports events and cultural competitions. He clarified that no spot or direct registrations will be permitted on the days of the event. Registered participants will be provided with special T-shirts and caps, and they must compulsorily carry their departmental identity cards along with Aadhaar cards during the event.

He further stated that only those government employees who have completed online registration and actively participate in the sports meet will be eligible for a special two-day leave facility. This provision, he said, has been made to encourage greater participation while ensuring proper planning and smooth conduct of the event.

Highlighting a special attraction, Muddajji announced that, for the first time in the history of the district government employees association, a unique entertainment programme titled Sankranti Sambhrama – Suggina Siri will be organised on January 29 at 6 pm. The programme is being planned to coincide with the harvest festival celebrations and to offer a festive experience to employees and their families.

The cultural evening will feature a musical extravaganza by noted singer Kambada Rangaiah and his troupe, known for their performances on Zee Kannada's Sa Re Ga Ma Pa.

# Blood Donation Camp Achievements Highlighted

**HAVERI**

The significant achievements of a recently organised blood donation camp and the consistent efforts in blood collection across the district were highlighted during a special felicitation programme held in the city, where District Medical Officer Dr Basavaraj Talwar was honoured by a voluntary organisation for his dedicated service to public health.

Speaking at the programme, members of the organisation said that the success of blood donation initiatives in the district was the result of coordinated efforts between the health department, voluntary groups and socially conscious citizens. They noted that under the guidance and leadership of Dr Talwar, blood donation camps have been conducted in a systematic manner, ensuring adequate availability of blood for emergency medical needs, surgeries and treatment of patients suffering from chronic illnesses.

The organisers explained that the recent blood donation camp witnessed enthusiastic participation from youths, social organisations, government employees and members of the general public. Hundreds of units of blood were collected, contributing significantly to strengthening the district blood bank reserves. The initiative, they said, played a crucial role in addressing seasonal shortages and ensuring timely support for government hospitals and private healthcare facilities alike. Honouring Dr Basavaraj Talwar, the organisation praised his commitment to promoting voluntary blood donation as a social responsibility. They highlighted his continuous awareness campaigns, coordination with educational institutions and encouragement to NGOs, which helped build trust and awareness about the importance of safe blood donation. His proactive approach in improving blood collection mechanisms and maintaining quality standards was also appreciated.

In his address after receiving the honour, Dr Talwar expressed gratitude to the organisation and dedicated the recognition to healthcare workers, volunteers and blood donors who selflessly contribute to saving lives.

# One Lakh Tree Plantation Campaign to Be Held at Srishaila

**BIDAR**

A major environmental initiative titled the One Lakh Tree Plantation Campaign will be organised at Srishaila on February 6 and 7, along with the Akka Mahadevi National Award presentation ceremony. The invitation letter for the programme was formally released in Bidar city by district in-charge secretary Eshwar Khandre.

Speaking on the occasion, organisers said the campaign is being conducted in the name of Mata Karunadevi, who dedicated her life to the welfare of the world. They described it as a matter of pride and satisfaction that a massive plantation drive involving one lakh saplings, along with awareness activities, is being undertaken in her honour. The campaign aims to promote environmental protection, ecological balance and public awareness about the importance of trees.

Addressing the gathering, Dr Rajshekhar Shivacharya of the Bemalkhed Hiremath Institution said that under the inspiration of Shivayya Swami, the campaign has already been successfully carried out over the past eight months from villages to cities. He noted that the initiative has made a significant contribution towards environmental conservation and has received encouraging public support across regions.

It was informed that the main programme at Srishaila will include both the plantation drive and the Akka Mahadevi National Award ceremony, during which women achievers will be honoured for their outstanding contributions in various fields. The organisers said the event will serve as a platform to recognise social service, cultural achievements and commitment to environmental causes.

# Aided High School Headmasters' Association Honours Veerashaiva Lingayat Mahasabha National President Khandre

**BIDAR**

The Aided High School Headmasters' Association organised a special felicitation programme in the city on Tuesday to honour Khandre, the national president of the Akhila Bharata Veerashaiva Lingayat Mahasabha, in recognition of his contribution to social service, education and community leadership.

The programme was held in a dignified manner with the participation of senior educationists, headmasters, community leaders and well-wishers. Members of the association said the honour was a mark of respect for Khandre's consistent efforts in strengthening educational values and promoting social harmony through constructive initiatives. Speaking on the occasion, office-bearers of the Aided High School Headmasters' Association highlighted the role played by Khandre in supporting educational institutions, especially aided schools, which cater to students from rural and economically weaker backgrounds. They said such institutions form the backbone of the education system by providing affordable and quality education, and leaders who understand and support their challenges deserve public recognition. The speakers also noted that Khandre has been actively involved in advocating for the rights and welfare of teachers and students, while encouraging reforms aimed at improving academic standards. His leadership in the Veerashaiva Lingayat Mahasabha, they said, has helped bring together social, cultural and educational organisations on a common platform for the larger good of society.

In his address after receiving the honour, Khandre expressed gratitude to the Aided High School Headmasters' Association for the recognition. He said teachers and headmasters play a vital role in shaping the future of the nation by nurturing young minds with knowledge, discipline and values. Describing education as a powerful tool for social transformation, he called upon educators to continue their dedicated service despite challenges.

Khandre also emphasised the need for unity and cooperation among various sections of society to address issues related to education, employment and social justice. He assured the gathering that the Veerashaiva Lingayat Mahasabha would continue to support initiatives aimed at strengthening education and empowering communities through awareness and inclusive development.

# School Leadership Excellence Award 2026 Conferred at B'luru Ceremony

**BIDAR**

The School Leadership Excellence Award 2026 was conferred during a prestigious ceremony titled Shala Mukhandara Prashasti Sammelana 2026, held recently at the Bayers Souharda Bhavan in Bengaluru. The event brought together educationists, administrators and policymakers to recognise exemplary service and leadership in the field of school education.

The award was presented in recognition of dedicated service in the field of wisdom management and institutional leadership. The honour was bestowed upon Muhammad Salahuddin Phahad, a key functionary associated with Wisdom Management Services, for his significant contributions towards strengthening educational institutions and promoting quality-driven school administration.

The award ceremony witnessed the presence of several eminent personalities from the education and public life. The chief guests included senior leaders and office-bearers associated with minority education institutions at both the central and state levels.

Their presence added prominence to the event and highlighted the growing emphasis on leadership, governance and innovation in school education.

Speaking on the occasion, the dignitaries stressed that effective school leadership plays a crucial role in shaping students' futures and ensuring inclusive, value-based education.

**SHIVAYOGI SIDDARAMESHWARA JAYANTI**

# *SHIVAYOGI SIDDARAMESHWARA REMEMBERED AS KAYAKA YOGI*

**KOPPAL**

Shivayogi Siddarameshwara, who combined social reform with tireless community service, is rightly remembered as a Kayaka Yogi, said Aravind S. Vaddar, Kannada professor at S.S. Bhoomareddy College, Gajendragad. He was delivering a special lecture during the Shri Shivayogi Siddarameshwara Jayanti programme organised on Tuesday at the Sahitya Bhavan in Koppal city.

The event was jointly organised by the district administration, Zilla Panchayat, Kannada and Culture Department, and Koppal City Municipal Council. Speaking on the occasion, Vaddar said that before the 12th century, society was deeply affected by superstition, social inequality and exploitation under rigid caste structures and oppressive state systems. Against this backdrop, the 12th-century movement led by Basavanna and other Sharanas gave rise to the historic Kalyana Revolution, one of the greatest social reform movements in the world.He explained that the revolution resulted in the emergence of vachana literature, through which many Sharanas illuminated society with progressive ideas. Shivayogi Siddarameshwara emerged as one of the distinguished vachana poets at Basavanna's Anubhava Mantapa and played a key role in spreading values of equality, dignity of labour and social justice. Vaddar described Shivayogi Siddarameshwara as a renowned social worker who practised what he preached. By engaging in his traditional occupation, he contributed to the construction of tanks and lakes, demonstrating that no work is inferior when done with self-respect. He urged people, especially the younger generation, to understand the importance of education in present times and to ensure that their children receive quality education. Taking inspiration from Siddarameshwara and other great reformers, he said, educated individuals must work towards the development of their communities and make meaningful contributions to society.

Presiding over the programme, Jagadguru Immadi Siddarameshwara Mahaswamiji of the Bagalkote and Chitradurga Bovi Gurupeetha said the concept of kayaka was deeply rooted in the Bovi community, which has historically contributed to building homes, temples, monasteries and palaces, thereby shaping both physical structures and human values. He noted that Shivayogi Siddarameshwara had mastered 64 forms of knowledge and emphasised that education remains the most powerful weapon to address social problems.

## QUICK READ

### Goat Rearing Training Programme Organised for Farmers

**CHITRADURGA**

With the objective of enhancing livestock productivity and improving farmers' income through modern practices, the Department of Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Services has organised a two-day scientific sheep and goat rearing training programme for farmers. The training will be conducted on January 30 and 31 at the Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Training Centre located within the veterinary hospital premises near the main post office in Chitradurga city. According to an official release issued on Tuesday, the training programme is designed to equip farmers with scientific knowledge and practical skills related to sheep and goat farming. Participants will be trained in key aspects such as breed selection, housing management.

### Initiative to Promote Awareness of Digital Registration

**CHITRADURGA**

In a move to ensure the effective implementation of the paperless registration system, the district administration has organised a series of training programmes at sub-registrar offices across all taluks of Chitradurga district. The initiative is aimed at familiarising document writers, advocates, service centre staff and the general public with the new digital registration process. According to a press release issued by District Registrar Kariyamma T.K.O., the training programmes will be conducted at designated sub-registrar offices on different dates and times to ensure maximum participation and convenience for stakeholders. The workshops are intended to create awareness and build technical capacity among those directly involved in property registration and related documentation.

### Ranganath R. Earns PhD from Davangere University

**CHITRADURGA**

Ranganath R., a native of Haleyalanadu village in Hiriyur taluk of Chitradurga district, has been awarded a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degree by Davangere University for his outstanding research contribution in Kannada studies. He is the son of Rajamma and Rangaswamy, a couple from Haleyalanadu village, and his academic achievement has brought pride to his family and the region. Ranganath completed his doctoral research under the guidance of Professor Dr Jayaramayya V. of the Department of Kannada Studies. His research thesis, titled Chitradurga's Palegar Inscriptions: A Cultural Study, offers an in-depth analysis of historical inscriptions associated with the Palegar period of Chitradurga, shedding light on their cultural, social and administrative significance.

# Dr Shanmukhayya A. Totad Honoured with Reality Book of World Records

Dr Shanmukhayya A. Totad of Mainahalli was honoured with a world record award for 38 years of service

**KOPPAL**

Dr Shanmukhayya A. Totad, a native of Mainahalli village in Koppal taluk, has been honoured with the prestigious Reality Book of World Records award in recognition of his outstanding and sustained contributions across multiple fields over a period of 38 years. The honour was conferred during a grand programme organised as part of the 77th Republic Day celebrations at the Lalithakala Auditorium, Yeshwanthpur, Bengaluru.

The award ceremony was jointly organised by Kannada Kahale Ragarangini, Mysuru, and PRK Samskruthika Vedike, Karnataka. Dr Shanmukhayya was recognised for his remarkable service and achievements in literature, theatre, television, cinema, legal practice and social service. The organisers said his multi-dimensional contribution to society over nearly four decades made him a deserving recipient of the international-level recognition.

The award was formally presented by Pushpa R., Coordinator of the Reality Book of World Records, New Delhi, in the presence of distinguished guests and cultural dignitaries. Speakers at the event highlighted that Dr Shanmukhayya's journey reflects dedication, creativity and social commitment, making him an inspiration for the younger generation. They noted that his work has left a lasting impact not only in cultural and literary circles but

also in the field of social service and law.

The programme was presided over by Anandkumar, State President of Kannadasiri, who, in his address, praised Dr Shanmukhayya's versatility and consistent efforts in promoting Kannada language, culture and social values. He said individuals like Dr Shanmukhayya serve as cultural ambassadors who bridge tradition with contemporary expression. The ceremonial lighting of the lamp was performed by Bollappa Guruji of Mysuru and Dr Kadayya Swamiji of Rayabag, adding spiritual significance to the occasion. Senior advocate of the High Court, Bengaluru, M. Muniyappa, and Dr Krishna were present as chief guests and addressed the gathering, lauding the awardee's contributions and commitment to public service.

The event was smoothly compered by Dr Venkatesh R. Choutayi, who provided a detailed overview of Dr Shanmukhayya's achievements and professional journey. Cultural performances and patriotic presentations marked the Republic Day celebrations, creating an atmosphere of pride and cultural richness.

## Temple Donation Box Theft Reported in Rampura Village

**RAMANAGARA**

Ramanagara district witnessed an incident of theft targeting a temple donation box in Rampura village, causing shock and anger among devotees and villagers. According to local sources, unidentified miscreants broke into the temple premises during late night hours and stole the hundi (donation box), which contained offerings made by devotees over several days.The theft came to light early in the morning when temple priests and villagers arrived for routine worship and noticed the donation box missing. The matter was immediately brought to the attention of local residents, who gathered at the temple and expressed strong resentment over the incident. Many devotees described the act as an insult to religious sentiments and demanded swift action from the authorities. Preliminary information suggests that the thieves may have taken advantage of the quiet surroundings during the night to carry out the crime. While the exact amount of money stolen is yet to be ascertained, villagers believe the hundi contained a significant sum.

# District Secures 3rd Place for Outstanding Performance

**VIJAYAPURA**

Vijayapura district has secured third place at the state level for its outstanding performance under the Bhoomi Scheme, marking a significant administrative achievement. The recognition was conferred by the Revenue Department's Bhoomi Monitoring Cell, which issued a letter of appreciation acknowledging the district's efficient implementation and timely disposal of applications.

According to officials, the achievement is based on the district's performance during December 2025, when a total of 14,060 applications submitted by the public were processed and disposed of within the stipulated time frame. The swift and systematic handling of applications played a crucial role in elevating Vijayapura district to third position among all districts in the state. During the same period, the district recorded a sigma value of 5.52, resulting in a Disposal Index of 4.58766. Officials said this performance clearly reflects the effective and result-oriented implementation of the Bhoomi Scheme in the district. The Disposal Index is considered a key indicator of efficiency, measuring how promptly and effectively land-related applications are resolved. The Bhoomi Monitoring Cell stated that this notable achievement was possible due to the committed guidance of district-level officers and the dedicated efforts of all concerned officials and staff. Their coordinated work, accountability and focus on public service delivery were identified as the main reasons behind the success.

**Vijayapura district achieved third place at the state level for its exceptional performance under the Bhoomi land records scheme.**

The Bhoomi Scheme plays a vital role in providing citizens with transparent, reliable and timely land record services. Efficient disposal of applications not only reduces delays but also enhances public trust in the revenue administration. Officials said Vijayapura district's performance stands as a model for other districts striving to improve service delivery under the scheme.

Congratulating the district administration, the Bhoomi Monitoring Cell extended its appreciation to the Deputy Commissioner and all revenue officials and staff involved in implementing the scheme. The letter of appreciation noted that such achievements demonstrate how effective teamwork and adherence to timelines can significantly improve governance outcomes.

## Residents Honour Additional B.T. Kumaraswamy for Excellence

**CHITRADURGA**

Residents of the Davalagiri locality on Tuesday felicitated B.T. Kumaraswamy, Additional Deputy Commissioner of Chitradurga district, in recognition of his exemplary service in the conduct of elections. The honour was conferred following his selection for the state-level Best Election Management Award presented by the Election Commission of India. The felicitation programme was organised by local residents as a mark of appreciation for Kumaraswamy's commitment, integrity and efficiency in discharging election-related responsibilities. Speaking on the occasion, the residents said that free, fair and transparent elections form the foundation of democracy, and officers who work tirelessly to uphold this principle deserve public recognition.

They noted that Kumaraswamy played a key role in ensuring the smooth conduct of electoral processes, including voter awareness initiatives, coordination with various departments, and strict implementation of the Model Code of Conduct. His efforts, they said, helped ensure peaceful polling, high voter participation and efficient grievance redressal during elections held in the district. The residents recalled that election duties often involve long hours, pressure and constant vigilance, especially in sensitive situations. Despite these challenges, Kumaraswamy maintained professionalism and transparency, earning the trust of citizens as well as the administration.

**PUBLIC GRIEVANCE HEARING**

## MP Dr C.N. Manjunath Listens to Public Grievances at ZP Office

**RAMANAGARA**

Ramanagara witnessed an important public outreach initiative when Member of Parliament Dr C.N. Manjunath visited the Zilla Panchayat (ZP) office to personally receive grievances from citizens. The programme, aimed at strengthening direct communication between the public and their elected representative, drew a steady stream of people from different taluks of the district.

From early morning, residents gathered at the ZP office with written petitions and verbal complaints, hoping for swift intervention in long-pending issues. The grievances raised covered a wide range of civic and developmental concerns, including drinking water shortages, road repairs, sanitation problems, delays in welfare scheme benefits, land-related disputes, health services, and employment opportunities for youth.

Dr Manjunath patiently listened to each complainant, taking notes and seeking clarifications wherever necessary. He assured the public that their issues would be addressed in a time-bound manner through coordination with concerned departments. Officials from various line departments, including rural development, health, public works, and social welfare, were present during the programme to provide immediate responses and collect details for follow-up action.

Addressing the gathering, the MP said such grievance redressal meetings are essential to understand ground realities and bridge the gap between administration and citizens. He stressed that development should reach every section of society and that governance becomes more effective when people are given a direct platform to voice their concerns. Dr Manjunath also instructed officials to treat public complaints with seriousness and sensitivity. He emphasized that delays in resolving basic issues erode public trust and directed department heads to regularly review pending cases. In several instances, he issued on-the-spot directions to officials to conduct field inspections and submit reports within stipulated timelines. Many citizens expressed satisfaction over the initiative, stating that it gave them an opportunity to directly interact with their MP without intermediaries. Some beneficiaries of government schemes highlighted procedural hurdles, while farmers raised concerns related to irrigation, crop damage compensation, and access to agricultural support services.

## Only the Name of NREGA Scheme Has Changed, Says MP Dr C.N. Manjunath

**RAMANAGARA**

Ramanagara Member of Parliament C. N. Manjunath remarked that only the name of the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) scheme has changed, while its core objectives and benefits continue to remain the same. He made the statement while addressing a gathering during an interaction programme in Ramanagar district. Speaking to beneficiaries, officials, and local representatives, the MP said that the scheme, now widely referred to as MGNREGA, was originally designed to provide guaranteed employment to rural households and strengthen village-level infrastructure. The intention behind the programme has always been to ensure livelihood security for the rural poor. While governments may change names or introduce minor modifications, the foundation of the scheme remains intact, he said.

Dr Manjunath highlighted that the employment guarantee programme continues to play a crucial role in supporting rural families, especially during periods of economic distress, drought, and agricultural uncertainty. He noted that thousands of households in Ramanagar district depend on the scheme for supplementary income and urged officials to ensure its effective implementation without delays.

The MP expressed concern over complaints related to delayed wage payments, lack of sufficient workdays, and procedural hurdles faced by workers. He directed concerned officials to address these issues promptly and ensure transparency in job allocation, attendance records, and wage disbursement. The scheme is meant for the people at the grassroots, and any administrative lapses defeat its very purpose, he said. Emphasising accountability, Dr Manjunath asked Panchayat Development Officers and other implementing authorities to regularly monitor works taken up under the scheme. He stressed that projects such as water conservation, road improvement, desilting of tanks, and afforestation should be prioritised, as they not only generate employment but also contribute to long-term rural development.

CH CLASSIFIEDS
To place a classified ad contact: 080-41209042

**CHANGE OF NAME**

I, **ESMAIL JABIULLA B E @ ESMILJABIULLA B E** S/o ELIYAZ BASHA @ ILEAS BASHA, resident of Hale Peresandra, Mandikal Hobli, Chikkaballapur Taluk and District-562104. I have Changed my name from **ESMILJABIULLA B E** to **ESMAIL JABIULLA B E**, my Father name from **ILEAS BASHA** to **ELIYAZ BASHA,** my mother name from SYEDH BEGUM to SAIDHA BEGAM P S & My wife name from SHERIN TAJ B to SHEERIN TAJ B for all the purposes. Sworn before **K H Venkatappa,** Advocate & Notary, Chickballapura vide affidavit dated: 30/12/2025.

**NAME CHANGE**

I, **DILIP KUMAR MANJUNATH,** Slo. Manjunatha Doddyallappa, resident of No. 345, Gunjur Palya Road, Near Vinayaka Temple, Gunjur, Bangalore-560087, have changed my name to **DILIP KUMAR GUNJUR MANJUNATH**, vide affidavit dated: 27.01.2026, before Notary A.M RAJASEKAR, Bangalore

**GOVERNMENT OF KARNATAKA**
**Public Works Department**
**Executive Engineer PWD Division Chikkodi**

No/PWD/CKD DIV/AE-2/TENDER/2025-26/6224 DATE:23/01/2026

**E-Tender Notification**

Executive Engineer PWD Division Chikkodi has invited item wise e-Tenders from Registration in KPWD Department authorized by Karnataka Government for the works coming under the jurisdiction of Chikodi PWD Division 1 work under head of account 8443-Deposit Contribution amount put to tender is Rs. 67.74 Lakhs.

Calendar of events:

1) Last date for queries & clarifications : 11-02-2026 up to 5.30 PM, 2) Last Date of Receipt of Bids : 13-02-2026 up to 5.00 PM, 3) Date of opening of Technical bids (Two Cover System): 16-02-2026 at 4.30 PM, 4) Date of opening of Financial bids (Two Cover System): "after approval of Technical bids", 5) If no bid received auto extension will be done by e-proc itself for 2 days.

For more information & forms of tender can be downloaded from kppp.karnataka.gov.in & departmental web site www.kpwd.gov.in. Further details can be collected from O/o Executive Engineer Public Works Dept.,Division Chikkodi during working hours.

DIPR/BGM/RO-NO-1703/KSMCA/2025-26

**Sd/- Executive Engineer PWD Division Chikodi.**

Altum Credo Home Finance **ALTUM CREDO HOME FINANCE PRIVATE LTD**
**Regd. Office:** Floor No. 7, Kalpataru Infinia, Wakdewadi, Shivajinagar, Pune - 411005. Maharashtra (India)

**POSSESSION NOTICE** [Rule 8(1)] (For immovable property)

Whereas, The undersigned being the Authorized Officer of **Altum Credo Home Finance Private Limited** hereinafter referred as **"ACHFL"** under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (no. 3 of 2002) and in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13(12) read with rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued Demand notice dated **10.10.2024** with respect to Loan Agreement No. S162204000005 calling upon the **Mr. Kempachari ("BORROWER"), Mrs. Shobha ("CO-BORROWER"),** to repay the amount mentioned in the said notice being **Rs. 9,70,686/- (Rs. Nine Lakh Seventy Thousand Six Hundred and Eighty Six Rupees Only) as on 30-Sep-2024** within 60 days from the receipt of the said notice.

1. The borrowers having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrowers and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described herein below under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with rule 8 of said rules on the **24th day of January of the year 2026.**

2. The borrower/secured debtor and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with property will be subject to the charge of the ACHFL for an amount of **Rs. 9,70,686/- (Rs. Nine Lakh Seventy Thousand Six Hundred and Eighty Six Rupees Only) as on 30-Sep-2023 and further interest from 30/09/2024.**

3. The borrower's attention is invited to the provisions of sub- section (8) of section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets.

**DESCRIPTION OF THE IMMOVABLE PROPERTY**

All that Piece and parcel of Property No 63/42D E-khatha No.152900400600800363,Situated at Doddamannugudde Village, Bilagumba Grama Panchayath, Ramanagara Taluk, Ramanagara District, Measuring East To west 10.6680 Meters(35 feet) and North to South 6.096 Meters (20 feet), in all measuring 65.03 Square Meters (700 Square feet) and bounded on : On and Towards **East:** Property belongs to Ravi, On and Towards **West:** Road, On and Towards **South:** Property belongs to Angadi Ningaiah, On and Towards **North:** Property belongs to Gangadharachari.

**Sd/-**
**Authorized Officer**
**Altum Credo Home Finance Pvt. Ltd. (ACHFL)**

Place : Ramanagara, Karnataka
Date : 28.01.2026

## QUICK READ

### Char Dham panels weigh ban on non-Hindu entry

**Dehradun**

The Char Dham temple committees are thinking about banning non-Hindus from entering temples. Badrinath-Kedarnath Temple Committee president Hemant Dwivedi said the decision might come in the next board meeting. He added the issue will be discussed with the state government and Chief Minister. However, a senior official clarified no formal discussion has happened yet. They noted non-Hindus work with temples and visit with officials, saying groups like Sikhs, Jains, and Buddhists would not be affected. Wider consultation is needed.

### Bihar teacher arrested for anti-national slogan

**Patna**

A government school teacher in Supaul, Bihar, was arrested for allegedly shouting an anti-national slogan during Republic Day celebrations. The incident happened at Adarsh Middle School after the national flag was hoisted. Police registered a case and took the teacher into custody. The school headmaster said the slogan praised Jinnah and continued despite staff objections. The state education department has also started departmental action. Authorities are investigating and will decide further legal steps based on the school's report.

### Brother, sister die by poisoning after family dispute

**Banda**

In Banda district, a brother and sister died after allegedly consuming poison following a family dispute. Farmers found Anand Prakash Gupta (30) and his sister Chanchal Gupta (34) unconscious near the Bagai river and informed the police. The siblings were rushed to a hospital but were declared dead. Their bodies have been sent for postmortem. Preliminary investigations suggest the poisoning may have been due to family discord, though the exact cause will be confirmed after the medical report.

# India-EU must deepen defence industry cooperation

**NEW DELHI**

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Tuesday urged India and EU defence industries to work together to promote global security and stability. During a meeting with European Commission Vice President Kaja Kallas in New Delhi, the leaders discussed multiple aspects of bilateral defence and security cooperation.

Singh highlighted that shared democratic values, pluralism, and the rule of law form the foundation of India-EU partnership. He said

joint efforts will support India's Aatmanirbhar Bharat vision while aligning with the EU's strategic autonomy. The integration of defence supply chains will help build trusted ecosystems and future-ready capabilities. Singh also noted India's potential role in the EU's 'ReArm initiative' as the bloc seeks to diversify suppliers and reduce dependencies.

> Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and EU VP Kaja Kallas discuss deepening India-EU defence ties, supply chain integration, and joint cooperation in the Indian Ocean for global security and prosperity

Kallas welcomed India's 77th Republic Day celebrations and emphasized collaboration in the Indian Ocean Region through joint exercises and best-practice sharing. Both leaders discussed placing an EU Liaison Officer at the Indian Navy's Information Fusion Centre in Gurugram to strengthen operational coordination, counter-piracy, and threat assessment.

Singh and Kallas also agreed to deepen cooperation through multilateral forums and highlighted the recently signed Security and Defence Partnership as a milestone for further collaboration. Both sides expressed optimism about long-term strategic and industrial ties that enhance security, innovation, and regional stability.

## Congress slams govt over rising inequality, failing economy

**NEW DELHI**

Ahead of the Economic Survey and Union Budget, Congress on Tuesday questioned government statistics and released its report, "Inequality on the Rise, Welfare in Retreat – Real State of the Economy 2026." The party said it was crucial to highlight facts before the government's President's address, Economic Survey, and Budget present a "propaganda narrative."

AICC Research Department chairman Rajeev Gowda and colleague Amitabh Dubey said official GDP, manufacturing, and inflation numbers do not reflect ground realities. Gowda noted that the IMF

gave India a C grade for statistics, with GDP figures reportedly overstated and manufacturing growth far lower than claimed. He added that the rupee was Asia's worst-performing currency in 2025, net FDI was negative in several months, and investments were moving abroad.

Congress also highlighted falling manufacturing employment, weak MSME growth, and the concentration of wealth. The top 10 percent of Indians capture 58 percent of national income, while the bottom half gets only 15 percent. Top 1 percent owns 40 percent of wealth, and four in five Indians live on less than Rs 200 per day. Household debt has risen sharply to 41 percent, and savings are at a five-decade low.

Dubey criticised the government for focusing growth on a few while welfare, including MGNREGA, is under attack. He said, "Rising inequality and shrinking welfare are the clearest markers of massive economic mismanagement. Good policy begins with honest data, not manipulated figures that mislead the people."

## Cong vs BJP over Rahul, Kharge R-Day parade seat

**NEW DELHI**

The Congress on Monday accused the BJP government of disrespecting the Leaders of Opposition, Rahul Gandhi and Mallikarjun Kharge, by seating them in the third row during the Republic Day parade at Kartavya Path,

Images shared by Congress leaders showed both seated in the back rows, raising concerns over a "protocol lapse" and improper treatment.

Initially, Kharge was seated in the third row alongside Rahul Gandhi before being moved to the front row next to former Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar. Congress leaders called the seating arrangement a breach of tradition and decency. Randeep Surjewala wrote on X, "Does such treatment of the leader of the opposition meet the standards of decorum, tradition, and protocol? This shows the frustration of a government plagued by an in-

feriority complex."

Vivek Tankha described it as a "sheer lack of protocol and grace," adding that placing both leaders in the back was not just an insult to them but to the nation. Manickam Tagore recalled that in 2014, opposition leader L K Advani had been seated in the front row, questioning the current lapse.

BJP spokesperson Shehzad Poonawala defended the seating, saying it followed the Warrant of Precedence. He accused Congress of prioritising "entitlement and ego" over national events and questioned Rahul Gandhi's absence from key occasions such as the Vice President and Chief Justice oath-taking ceremonies.

The controversy has sparked a debate over parliamentary protocol, political decorum, and respect for opposition leaders during national ceremonies, highlighting ongoing tensions between the ruling party and Congress.

## 4 killed in multi-vehicle crash on Jammu–Srinagar highway

**JAMMU**

At least four people died on Tuesday in a multi-vehicle collision on the Jammu–Srinagar National Highway (NH-44) near Jakhani Chowk in Udhampur district. The accident involved a bus, a car, and a motorcycle, and the victims reportedly died on the spot. Rescue teams and police rushed to the scene to manage relief operations and clear the highway. Details of possible injuries are still being verified. This accident follows another major tragedy on January 22 in Doda district, where 10 Army personnel died and 10 others were injured after a vehicle lost control and fell into a gorge. Authorities say overloading, over-speeding, rash driving, and road rage remain major causes of accidents across Jammu and Kashmir.

Traffic officials have intensified safety measures, deploying special enforcement teams and conducting awareness campaigns. Violations like reckless driving, dangerous stunts, and allowing minors to drive can lead to cancellation of licences or imprisonment. Two-wheeler riders must wear helmets of prescribed standards, and petrol pumps are barred from fueling riders without helmets. Authorities are also addressing the rising trend of motorcycle stunts among youth, which endangers both riders and pedestrians. Officials warn that irresponsible parenting, peer influence, and weak supervision often contribute to such risky behaviour. Counseling sessions for drivers and occasional helmet distribution are being used to promote safer practices.

## Goldy Brar parents arrested in Punjab extortion case

**MUKTSAR**

Punjab Police on Tuesday arrested the parents of foreign-based gangster Satinderjeet Singh, also known as Goldy Brar, in connection with an extortion case registered in Muktsar district last year. Brar's father, Shamsher Singh, and mother, Preetpal Kaur, residents of Adesh Nagar on Kotkapura Road, were taken into custody from Amritsar following investigative leads. The family hails from Faridkot district.

Senior Superintendent of Police Abhimanyu Rana said the arrests were made after thorough investigation into the complaint filed by a resident of Udekaran village last year. Shamsher Singh, a former Assistant Sub-Inspector in Punjab Police, was compulsorily retired in 2021 after allegations of involvement in a Muktsar murder case.

Goldy Brar is the prime accused in the 2022 murder of Punjabi singer Shubhdeep Singh, popularly known as Sidhu Moosewala, in Mansa district and had claimed responsibility publicly. He left

India in 2017 on a student visa to Canada and is believed to be currently in the United States. In 2024, the Union government designated him an "individual terrorist" under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act for smuggling arms, ammunition, and explosives into India for targeted killings.

The arrests are part of an intensified crackdown on overseas gangsters under 'Operation Prahaar', now called 'Gangstran Te Vaar'. The Anti-Gangster Task Force says about 61 gangsters from Punjab are operating abroad, including 18 in the US, nine in UAE, six each in Canada and Germany, and five in the UK. Police have mapped nearly 1,200 associates and 600 family members involved in criminal activities, with 21 gangsters under red-corner notices and cash rewards announced for leads on arrests.

## CPI(ML) demands CBI probe into NEET student's death

**PATNA**

CPI(ML) Liberation's women and students wings on Tuesday demanded a CBI probe into the death of an 18-year-old NEET aspirant from Jehanabad and announced a 10-day protest march, the 'Beti Bachao Nyaya Yatra,' starting February 4. The march will travel from Jehanabad to Patna, concluding at the state assembly on February 13. The deceased student was found unconscious in her hostel room in Patna on January 6 and passed away at a private hospital on January 11 after remaining in a coma. Initial police reports denied sexual assault allegations, but later forensic tests detected traces of semen on her clothes. The post-mortem report indicated injuries to her private parts and nail abrasions.

AIPWA national general secretary Meena Tiwari said the government should immediately act on the family's demand for a CBI probe and urged the Patna High Court to intervene. A special investigation team (SIT) is currently probing the case. Patna Police have suspended two officers for dereliction of duty. Tiwari charged the government with delaying the investigation and attempting a cover-up.

**ALTUM CREDO HOME FINANCE PRIVATE LTD**
Regd. Office: Floor No. 7, Kalpataru Infinia, Wakdewadi, Shivajinagar, Pune - 411005. Maharashtra (India)

APPENDIX IV **POSSESSION NOTICE** (FOR IMMOVABLE PROPERTY)

The undersigned being the authorized officer of **Altum Credo Home Finance Pvt. Ltd., (ACHFL),** Under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 ("SARFAESI Act, 2002") and in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13(12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 ("Enforcement Rules"). Demand Notice(s) issued by the Authorized Officer of the company to the Borrower(s)/ Co-Borrower(s) and Guarantor(s) (collectively referred to as the "Borrowers") mention herein below to repay the amount mentioned in the notice within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice. The borrowers having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to Borrowers and the public in general that the under signed has taken symbolic / physical possession of the property described herein below in supersize of powers conferred upon him under Subsection(4)of Section 13 of the said act read with Rule 8 of the Security Interest Enforcement rules, 2002. The borrower's attention is invited to prevision of sub-section (8) of section 13 of the Act, in receipt of time available, to redeem the secured assets. The borrowers in particular and the public in general are hereby caution not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of **ACHFL** for an amount mention herein under with the interest thereon.

| Name of Borrower(s)/ Co-Borrower(s) and Guarantor(s) Loan A/c No. | |
|---|---|
| 1. BASAPPA (Applicant), 2. ANJANEYA B (Co-applicant), LAN- 1192020100220 | |
| **Description of Secured Asset** | |
| All that piece and parcel of Property bearing Current Door No. 132, being the Western Portion out of total area 33 ft. x 45 ft., admeasuring 16.5 ft. x 45 ft. = 742.5 Square Feet, situated at Kundhawad Division, Davangere, along with all easementary and appurtenant rights, within the limits and under the jurisdiction of the competent authority, which is bounded as under: **East :** Property of Gowramma, **West :** House of Talwar Yallappa, **South:** House of Tyanagi Chandrappa, **North :** Road. | |
| **Date of Demand Notice and Amount** | |
| 10-10-2025 / Rs. 6,28,331/- (Rupees Six Lakh Twenty Eight Thousand Three Hundred Thirty One Only) | |
| NPA Date - 28-09-2025 | Date of Possession : 24-01-2026 |

**STATUTORY NOTICE TO BORROWERS/ CO-BORROWERS AND GUARANTORS**
Borrower(s)/ Co-Borrower(s) and Guarantor(s) are hereby put to caution that the property may be sold at any time hereinafter by way of public auction/tenders and as such this may also be treated as a notice under Rule 6,8 & 9 of Security (interest) Enforcement Rules,2002.

Sd/-
Place : Davangere, Karnataka
Date : 28.01.2026
Authorized Officer
Altum Credo Home Finance Pvt. Ltd. (ACHFL)

CH CLASSIFIEDS
To place a classified ad contact: 080-41209042

**MANAPPURAM HOME FINANCE LIMITED**
FORMERLY MANAPPURAM HOME FINANCE PVT LTD
CIN : U65923KL2010PLC039179
**Regd Office:** 8/596 A, Padmaprabha Building, Near Sreerama Swami Temple, Cherppu - Thriprayar Road, Thriprayar, Thrissur, Kerala 680567 | **Phone No.:** 0487-3520504, **Website:** www.manappuramhomefin.com

**POSSESSION NOTICE** (For Immovable Property)

Whereas, the undersigned being the authorised officer of **Manappuram Home Finance Ltd ("MAHOFIN")** under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest *[Act], 2002 (54 of 2002) and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13(12) read with rule 9 of the security interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued a **Demand Notice** calling upon the borrowers and co-borrowers to repay the amount mentioned in the notice and Interest thereon within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice. The borrower having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken **Symbolic** possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/her under section 13(4) of the said *[Act] read with rule 9 of the said rules. The borrower in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of the Manappuram Home Finance Ltd as mentioned below for each of the respective properties:

| Sr. No. | Name of Borrower and Co-borrower / Loan account number/ Branch | Description Of Secured Asset In Respect Of Which Interest Has Been Created | Date of Demand Notice sent & Outstanding Amount | Date of Possession |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | J B Kavitha K, Kumara C, **/MHL00510016058/** Shimoga | All That Part And Parcel of The Property Bearing Rdpr Katha No.152400401200420026, As Per Gram Panchayat Record Property No.70/1 Measuring In Total 143.07 Sq Meter Including Measuring 88.26 Sq Meter House Property Situated At Mallapura Village Mudubasiddapura Gram Panchayat. Shikaripura Taluk And Shivamogga District, Karnataka - 577214. East-Road, West-Road, South-House of Annappa Bhoovi, North-Share of Ramesh | 18-10-2025 & Rs.440232/- | 23-01-2026 |
| 2 | Radha G, Siddaraju S, **/MHL00340030199/** Mysore | All That Piece And Parcel of The Property Bearing No. 27/2A, Pl.D. No.152100300400500613, Situated At Kyathanahalli Grama, Kyathanahalli Gramapanchayat, Malavalli Block, Mandya (D), Karnataka - 571463. Admeasuring 132.67 Sq Mts. East-House of Mahesha, West-House of Venkatesha, South-Site of Doddamuthaiah, North-Road | 18-10-2025 & Rs.405798/- | 23-01-2026 |
| 3 | Shantamma D, Shivarudra M M, **/MHL00900030185/** Vivekananda Circle | All That Piece And Parcel of The Property Bearing No. 201, Pl.D. No.152200102023900297, Situated At K.R. Pura Grama, Hosaholalu Gramapanchayat, Heggadadevanakote Block, Mysore (D), Karnataka - 571114 Admeasuring 223.97 Sq Mts. East-Property, West-Site of Somesha, South-Govt. Oni, North-Site of Saralamma | 18-10-2025 & Rs.458023/- | 23-01-2026 |
| 4 | Riyanabi Gorisab Mujavar, Gorisaab Mujavar, Gorisaab Allisaab Mujavar, Moulalii Gorisab Mujavar, Ramizabi Ahmedasab Bhagavathi, **/MLAP0026031947/** Hubli | Residential Gramthana Property Bearing Vpc No.13/A, Property No.152700700800100148, Measuring East To West: 20.50 Mtr And North To South: 6.40Mtr, Total Measuring 131.20Sq Mtr And Building Measuring 115.20Sq Mtr, Situated At Yarebail Village Within Nandikatta Gram Panchayat, Tq: Mundagod & Dist: Uttar Kannada, Karnataka - 581349. East-Gram Panchayat Road, West-Gramthana, South-Property of Mohammedsharif, North-Property of Saidsab | 18-10-2025 & Rs.516033/- | 23-01-2026 |
| 5 | Yallappa Kenchappa Harijan, Kamalavva Harijana, Madhu Harijan, Shivappa Naduvinamani, **/NHL00260032891/** Hubli | Residential Property Bearing VPC No.565, Property No.151700200200120777, Measuring East To West: 12.192Mtr And North To South: 9.144Mtr, Total Measuring 111.48Sq Mtr And Building Measuring 58.53Sq Mtr, Situated At Naregal Village, Tq: Hanagal & Dist: Haveri, Karnataka - 581148. East-Property of Neelavva Fakkirappa Harijan, West-Panchayat Road, South - Property of Gurttemma Harijan, North-Panchayat Road | 18-10-2025 & Rs.507981/- | 23-01-2026 |
| 6 | Madan M, Mangalamma, Mahadevaswamy C, **/NHL00340037875/** Mysore | All That Piece And Parcel of The Property Bearing No.10/141, Pl.D. No.150800300800121568, Situated At Maduvinahalli Village, Maduvinahalli Gramapanchayath, Kolleregala Taluk, Chamarajanagara District, Karnataka - 571440 Measuring East To West 11.5824 Meters And North To South 8.5344 Meters, Totally 98.85 Square Meters. East-House Belongs To Mahadevamma, West-Road, South-Vacant Site Belongs To Doddaveerashetty, North-House Belongs To Thandashetty | 18-10-2025 & Rs.538902/- | 23-01-2026 |
| 7 | Jafar K Dinnimani, Nurajanabi Jafarasab Dinnimani, Asif Dawalasab Dinnimani, **/NHL00260037667/** Hubli | Residential Grantthana Property Bearing Vpc No.247/1B, Property No.150100501800282309, Measuring East To West: 14.6304000000000001Mtr And North To South:3.60Mtr, Total Measuring 52.97Sq Mtr And Building Measuring 52.97Sq Mtr, Situated At Madhurkhandi Village, Tq: Jamakhandi & Dist: Bagalkote, Karnataka - 587119. East-Road, West-Road, South-Property Of Lalsab Dinnimani , North-Road | 18-10-2025 & Rs.531992/- | 23-01-2026 |
| 8 | Somanath Bishtappa Arer, Bhishthappa Krishnappa Arer, Chennavva Bittappa Arer, **/NLAP0098038971/** Belgaum | All That Piece And Parcel of The Residential Property Bearing G.P.No. 537, Rdpr Pl.D. No. 150400304300200598, Situated At Aralikatti Village, Aralikatti Gram Panchayat, Belagavi Block, Belagavi (D), Karnataka - 591109. Total Measuring: 74.13 Square Meters. East-Property of Veerabhadrappa Sattigeri, West-Property of Kallappa Kammar, South-Government Road., North-Property of Laxmi Kammar | 18-10-2025 & Rs.477940/- | 23-01-2026 |
| 9 | Ramappa Y, Laxmi R, Devappa C, **/NHL01170041721/** Raichur | All That Piece And Parcel of The Residential House Property Bearing Panchayath No: 144 Its E Property No: 152300501500100157 Totally Measuring 83.52 Sq Meter, Situated At Bappur Village Within Limits of Gram Panchayath Bappur Tq Maski, Dist Raichur, Karnataka - 584132. East-Road, West-Bheemanna Mulimani, South-House of Amdamma W/O Gyanappa, North-House of Bheemachari | 18-10-2025 & Rs.416127/- | 23-01-2026 |
| 10 | Rajalakshmi C, Cheluvarayi B, Preethi G C, **/MHL00910013468/** Hassan | All That Piece And Parcel of The Site And House Property Bearing No.151600302000420174, Gram Panchayath Property No. 750 Situated At Ganguru Village, Ganguru Gram Panchayath, Arakalgudu Taluk And Hassan District Measuring: East To West: 13.716000000000001 Meters And North To South: 7.62 Meters, Totally Measuring 104.52 Square Meters And Constructed Plinth Area Measuring 104.51 Square Meters near Temple Arkalgud Hassan Karnataka Pin: 573133 P.o Gangur. East-Road., West-Own Property., South-House Property Of Govindegovwda. North-Conservancy And House Property of Sheela. | 18-10-2025 & Rs.473679/- | 23-01-2026 |
| 11 | Puttaraju D, Nagarathna G, Chethan P, **/NHL00340015483/** Mysore | All That Piece And Parcel of The Property Bearing No.68/1, Pl.D. No.152100408400400808, Situated At Thaggahalli Village, Thaggahalli, Grama Panchayath, Mandya Taluk, Mandya District, Measuring East To West 6.096 Meters And North To South 9.144 Meters, Totally 55.74 Square Meters. Thaggahalli Gp, Mandya Block, Mandya District., Main Road Mandya Mandya Karnataka Pin:571402 P.O. Kottathi. East-Site Belongs To D. Ravikumar, West-House Belongs To Doddadevaiah, South-Road., North-House Belongs To D. Devaiah. | 18-10-2025 & Rs.419149/- | 23-01-2026 |
| 12 | Tholasamma, Shakanayya, Kumara, **/MLAP0090044289/** Vivekananda Circle | Property Bearing Pa No. 14, Te Vahi 17/17, Pl.D. No.152200102625200016, Situated At Kenchanahalli Grama, N Beguru Gramapanchayat, Heggadadevakote Block, Mysore (D), Karnataka - 571116 Admeasuring 348.39 Sq Mts . East-Vacant Site, West-Government Road., South-Private Property, North-House of Malligamma | 18-10-2025 & Rs.474934/- | 23-01-2026 |
| 13 | Gangaiah H, Jayamma K, Sadashiva G, **/NHL00900016452/** Vivekananda Circle | All That Piece And Parcel of The Property Bearing No.75/3, Pl.D. No. 152200602411720058, Situated At Gorahalli Village, Chapparadahalli Grama Panchayath, Periyapatna Taluk And Mysuru District, Karnataka - 571102 Measuring East To West 9.14 Meters And North To South 10.36 Meters, Totally Measuring 94.69 Square Meters East-Road, West-Conservanc And House Belongs To Mahadeva., South-Conservancy And House Belongs To Siddamma., North-Conservancy And House Belongs To Appaji. | 18-10-2025 & Rs.409734/- | 23-01-2026 |
| 14 | Nagamma, Nagaraju, **/MHL00900044287/** Vivekananda Circle | All That Piece And Parcel of The Property Bearing No. 131/129, Pl.D. No.152200102625200155, Situated At Kenchanahalli Grama, N Beguru Gramapanchayat, Heggadadevanakote Block, Mysore (D), Karnataka -571116. Measuring: E-W: 22.86 Meter & N-S: 15.24 Meter Admeasuring 348.39 Sq Mts. East-Property. of Jayalakshmamma, West-Government Road., South-Government Road., North-House of Mahadevaiah | 18-10-2025 & Rs.368483/- | 23-01-2026 |
| 15 | Sandhya S Patil, Sudhir Raghunath Patil, Raghunath Maruti Patil, **/MHL00980024827/** Belgaum | All That Piece And Parcel of The Residential Property Bearing G.P No.176, Rdpr Pl.D. No. 150400703700400261, Situated At Manturga Village, Manturga Gram Panchayat, Khanapur Block, Belagavi (D), Karnataka - 591302 Admeasuring: 93.25 Sq. Meters.. East-Public Road, West-Property of Bhagirati Arun Patil, South-1. Raghunath Maruti Patil, 2. Chandrakant Maruti Patil, North-Gram Panchayat Road | 18-10-2025 & Rs.369418/- | 23-01-2026 |
| 16 | Shivamma M, Thippanna Y, Chandrappa T, **/MLAP0048002204/** Davangare | All That Piece And Parcel of The Property No 67/1, E Swathu No. 151200200800200072, Measuring 25 X 33 Fts I.e 825 Sq Fts, Situated At Putagnaal Village, Kadajji Gram Panchayath, Davangere, Karnataka - 577002. East-Sewage And Road, West-House of Palappa, South-Sewage And Road, North-Conservancy | 18-10-2025 & Rs.349492/- | 23-01-2026 |
| 17 | Annapurna Vishvanath Killikettar, Vishvanath Arjun Killikettar, Mahantesh Vishvanath Killikettar, **/MHL00980023488/** Belgaum | All That Piece And Parcel of The Residential Property Bearing G.P No.158, Rdpr Pid No.150400303100320256, Situated At Shaganamatti Village, Mastamaradi Gram Panchayat, Belagavi Block, Belagavi (D). Measuring: East To West: 15.24 Meter And North To South: 5.48 Meter. Admeasuring: 83.63 Sq. Meters. [15.24 X 5.48 = 83.63] (Hereinafter Referred To As The Said House"). Within The Limits of Gram Panchayath Mastamaradi, Tal: & Dist: Belagavi, Within The Limits of Jurisdiction of Sub-Registrar Belagavi. Boundaries Innthe Land And Building: As Per Pl.D. Extract. Sy. No. 158 Pl.D. No. 150400303100320256 At/P Shaganamatti Tq/ Dist/ Belgaum, Maruti Galli Belgaum, Belgaum Karnataka Pin: 590003 P.O. Belgaum Fort. East-Road, West-Property of Vishwanath Killiketar, South-Property of Vishwanath Killiketar, North-Property of Bharati Killiketar | 18-10-2025 & Rs.303289/- | 23-01-2026 |
| 18 | Mustaqahmad Maktumsab Tadakod, Maktumsab Kasimsab Tadakod, Shamasha Maktumsab Tadkod, **/NHL00980035499/** Belgaum | All That Piece And Parcel of Residential Property Bearing Gp No. 33, Swattin No. 150400201800200374, Total Measuring 70.59, Towards East-West: 5.79 And Towards North-South: 12.192 Situated At Dematti, Tal: Kittur & Dist: Belagavi, Karnataka - 591115. East-By Property No. 36, West-By Property No. 38, South-Road, North-By Property No. 32 | 18-10-2025 & Rs.327100/- | 23-01-2026 |
| 19 | Vinodamma, Somashekharappa S E, Manjunatha S, Hemantha S, **/MHL00480043019/** Davangare | E Swathu No. 151000201900620186, Property No. -290/1, Measuring 4.572 × 10.972 Meter = 50.16 Sq.mtr, Iyyanahalli Kurubarahatty Grama, Iyyanahalli Grama Panchayath, Chitradurga, Chitradurga. Karnataka, Pincode-577502. East-House of Rudramma, West-House of Parvathamma, South-Road, North-Road | 18-10-2025 & Rs.212785/- | 23-01-2026 |
| 20 | Indramma S, Lohitha S, Megharaja S, **/MHL00510008620/** Shimoga | All That The Piece or Parcel of Site Along With Structure Standing There On Being Bearing Site/Property No. 15, E-Property No. 152400403300300047, Measuring East-West 30.48 X North-South 12.4968 Meter, Total 380.90 Sq. Meter, Includingi05.91 Sq. Meter Building, Situated At Shiddihalli Village, Thogarsi Village Panchayath, Shikaripura Taluk, Shivamogga District, Karnataka - 577433. East-Road, West-Survey Number, South- Property of Jayamma W/O Ramesha, North-Property of Ramappa S/O Hanumanthappa | 18-10-2025 & Rs.282159/- | 23-01-2026 |
| 21 | Kavitha, Hanumanthappa, Sharath H C, Rajappa, **/MHL00260037251/** Hubli | Pl.D. No:152400603900220046G, P.No:44, Measuring 227.37 Sq.mtrs, In Hurali Gram Panchayath At: Huralikoppa Tq: Soraba Dt: Shivamogga, Near Main Road, Sorab, P.O. Huruli, Shimoga, Karnataka, Pin: 577413. East House of Fakkirappa, West-Property of Ratnamma Sali, South-House of Mahadevappa, North-Panchayat Road | 18-10-2025 & Rs.536082/- | 23-01-2026 |
| 22 | Basavaraj B Navi, Rupa Basavaraj Navi, Prakash Navi, **/NHL01370049849/** Vijayapura | New Property No. 5-562-960 Ward No: 13, Old Property No: 420, Measuring 600 Sq.ft Near Revappana Maddi, Indi, Tq. Indi, Dist. Vijayapur, Karnataka - 586209. East-Plot No. 100, West-Ploy No. 102, South-Road, North-Road | 18-10-2025 & Rs.533580/- | 23-01-2026 |
| 23 | Muthali Bhovi, Bukkani B, Nagaraju M, **/NHL00900028345/** Vivekananda Circle | All That Peace & Parcel of The Property Bearing No. 335/32=, Pl.D. No.150800302200800314, Ramapura Gramapanchayat, Hanuru Block, Chamarajanagara (Bd): Measuring 156.08 Sq Mts, Karnataka-571444. East-House of Poojari, West-Sandidari, South-Road, North-Vacant Site | 18-10-2025 & Rs.692291/- | 23-01-2026 |
| 24 | Praveena Kumara P, Gangamma P, N Prashanth, **/NHL00510008060/** Shimoga | All That The Piece or Parcel of Site Along With Structure Standing There On Being Bearing Site/ A Property No. 473, Sl No. 603, Measuring 15 X 80 Feet, Situated At Hittala Village, Hittala Village Panchayath, Shikaripura Taluk, Shivamogga District, Karnataka-577214. East-Village Panchayath Road, West-Agala, South-Property of A. K. Shekarappa, North-Canal | 18-10-2025 & Rs.643002/- | 23-01-2026 |
| 25 | Manjula Shivanand Salahalli, Shivanand Giriyappa Salahalli, Shantavva Giriyappa Salahalli, **/MHL00980023012/** Belgaum | All That Piece And Parcel of The Residential Property Bearing G.P No. 215, Rdpr Pl.D. No.150400902300100238, Situated At Revadikoppa Village, Sureban Gram Panchayat, Ramdurga Block, Belagavi (D), Karnataka - 591127 Admeasuring: 80.33 Sq.meters. East-Road, West Property of Giriyappa Ningappa Salahalli, South-Bangi Road, North-Property of Yallavva Kadar | 18-10-2025 & Rs.511976/- | 23-01-2026 |
| 26 | Bhagya R, Rakesh Y R, Ramesha M, **/MHL00340013451/** Mysore | All That Piece And Parcel of The Property Bearing No. 761, Pl.D. No. 151800208300200407, Situated At Gummanakolli Grama, Mullusoge Gramapanchayat, Somavarapete Block, Kodagu (D), Karnataka-571234 Admeasuring: 111.48 Sq Mts. East-Road, West-House of Susheela, South-Vacant Site, North-House of Nagaraju | 18-10-2025 & Rs.505242/- | 23-01-2026 |
| 27 | Thimmesha D, Monika T, Duggamma D, **/NHL00510029059/** Shimoga | All That The Piece or Parcel of Site Along With Structure Standing There on Being Bearing Site/Property No. 12, E-Property No. 152400502700200012, Measuring Total 111.52 Sq. Meter, Including 60.50 Sq. Meter, House, Situated At Basavapura Village, Agasavalli Village Panchayath, Shivamogga Taluk, Shivamogga District, Karnataka - 577202. East-Property of Hussain Sab, West-Road, South-Property of Dodda Thimma Bovi, North-Property of Sanna Thimma Bovi | 18-10-2025 & Rs.507725/- | 23-01-2026 |
| 28 | Yallamma, Shivappa, Geetha, **/MLAP0117039917/** Raichur | Panchayath No 296 Pl.D. 152300301800120043, Totally Measuring 111.48 Sq.meter, Village: K Gudadinni Gp: K Gudadinni Tq: Sirwar Dist: Raichur, Near Main Road, Manvi, P.O. Gudadinni, Raichur, Karnataka, Pin: 584123. East-House of Basavaraj S/O Lachammanna, West-Road, South-Road, North-Road | 18-10-2025 & Rs.321806/- | 23-01-2026 |
| 29 | Asha Rani N, Chamaraju Y M, **/MLAP0090022663/** Vivekananda Circle | All That Piece And Parcel of The Property Bearing No.320, Pl.D. No.150800102100420178, Situated At Yalakkuru Village, Kuderu Gramapanchayath, Chamarajanagara Taluk, Chamarajanagara District, Measuring East To West 9.144 Meters And North To South 12.192 Meters, Total Measuring 111.48 Meters. main Road Chamarajanagar Mysore Karnataka Pin:571316 P.O. Kuderu. East-House Belongs To M. Ramaswamy., West-House Belongs To Chandraiah., South-Road., North-House Belongs To Mahadevaiah. | 18-10-2025 & Rs.305532/- | 23-01-2026 |
| 30 | Sanju D J, Jayarama R, Vijaya S, **/NHL00910007720/** Hassan | All That Piece And Parcel of The Site And House Property Bearing No.151600502000700055, Gram Panchayath Property No. 47, Survey No. 38/11 Situated At Dyavenahalli Village, Bagooru Gram Panchayath, Channarayapattana Taluk, Hassan District, Totally Measuring 83.52 Square Meters, Karnataka-573116. East-Property Belongs To Sri. Harish., West-Property of Sri. Chandregowda., South-Property Belongs To Sri. Muddegowda., North-Road | 18-10-2025 & Rs.900769/- | 23-01-2026 |

Date: 28th January 2026 | Place: KARNATAKA — Sd/- Authorised Officer Manappuram Home Finance Ltd

## QUICK READ

### Public anger flares after Pakur bus accident

**Pakur**

Anger erupted in Jharkhand's Pakur on Tuesday after a school bus ran over a delivery boy near Gandhi Chowk. Mridul Saha, 18, from Talwadanga village, died on the spot after sustaining severe head injuries. Hundreds of residents blocked major roads and closed markets in protest, keeping the body on the street and demanding action. Locals blamed poor traffic management and negligence, saying buses often ignored no-entry rules. Police faced difficulties in sending the body for post-mortem due to public unrest.

### MMRDA flyover faces online criticism, mockery

**Mumbai**

A newly built flyover in Mira-Bhayandar, Mumbai, has sparked online criticism after a video showed it narrowing from four lanes to two midway. Social media users mocked the unusual design, calling it unsafe and confusing. The Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority (MMRDA), which built the double-decker flyover in Bhayander East, said the narrowing was due to space constraints and not a design error. Authorities assured the public that the flyover remains safe for commuters despite the lane reduction.

### Fire breaks out a Chennai Airport terminal

**Chennai**

A minor fire broke out on Tuesday in the departure area of Terminal 2 at Chennai International Airport near airline offices, officials said. Airport emergency teams quickly brought the blaze under control. No injuries were reported, and flight operations continued as scheduled. Authorities confirmed that the fire was confined to a small area and did not affect passenger zones or critical infrastructure. Safety protocols were immediately activated, ensuring normal terminal functioning. The cause of the fire is still under investigation.

# India-EU free trade deal marks historic economic leap: Yogi

'This strategic trade deal connects India with 27 European nations, giving preferential market access to over 99 per cent of Indian goods'

**LUCKNOW**

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has welcomed the successful conclusion of the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) between India and the European Union (EU), calling it a "historic leap" in India's economic growth.

In a post on X, the Chief Minister said the agreement opens export opportunities worth nearly ₹6.41 lakh crore, especially for labour-intensive industries.

Under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, this strategic trade deal connects India with 27 European nations, giving preferential market access to over 99 per cent of Indian goods. CM Yogi said it will benefit farmers, boost micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs), strengthen manufacturing and services, and create more jobs for skilled professionals.

The India-EU FTA is designed as a modern, rules-based partnership that addresses global economic challenges while promoting closer market integration between India and the EU, the world's fourth and second largest economies. Together, these markets represent over ₹2,091.6 lakh crore (USD 24 trillion), offering huge opportunities for trade, innovation, and economic growth.

The agreement provides India preferential access across 97 per cent of tariff lines, covering 99.5 per cent of trade value. Seventy per cent of these lines will have immediate duty removal for labour-intensive sectors such as textiles, leather, footwear, tea, coffee, spices, sports goods, toys, gems and jewellery, and selected marine products. Another 20 per cent of tariff lines will gradually reach zero-duty over three to five years for items including processed food, arms, and some marine products.

CM Yogi described the FTA as a blueprint for shared prosperity, a self-reliant India, and a stronger position in the global economy. Analysts say the agreement could transform trade relations and support India's long-term growth ambitions.

# MP signs power agreements for 4000 MW

**Attracts ₹60,000 crore investment and helps creat over 8,000 jobs, with new power plants set for Anuppur district**

**BHOPAL**

In a significant boost to the state's energy sector, Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav witnessed the signing of power supply agreements for 4,000 megawatts (MW) of electricity at Samatva Bhawan in Bhopal on Tuesday.

The new power plants will be developed in Anuppur district under the DBFOO model, which stands for Design, Build, Finance, Own, and Operate. CM Yadav highlighted that this initiative will bring direct investment of approximately ₹60,000 crore and generate employment for over 8,000 people, including 3,000 direct and nearly 5,000 indirect jobs.

Madhya Pradesh Power Management Company Limited (MPPMCL) invited bids for 3,200 MW of power from upcoming plants through a tariff-based competitive bidding process. A Green Shoe option allowed for the addition of another 800 MW, bringing the total capacity to 4,000 MW.

Under the bidding results, 800 MW was allocated to Hindustan Thermal Projects Limited, 1,600 MW to Torrent Power Limited, and 800 MW to Adani Power Limited. The extra 800 MW under the Green Shoe option was also allocated. Power Supply Agreements have been signed with Special Purpose Vehicles (SPVs) formed by these developers for all allocated capacities.

CM Yadav said the new power plants will not only meet Madhya Pradesh's growing energy demands but also give a strong push to industrial development. Power supply under these agreements is expected to begin in 2030, promising a more reliable and sustainable energy future for the state.

*SP chief Akhilesh Yadav accused the EC and BJP of harassing people in West Bengal*

# Yadav accuses EC BJP harassing WB

**HOWRAH**

Samajwadi Party (SP) chief Akhilesh Yadav on Tuesday alleged that the Election Commission of India (ECI), along with the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), was using the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) exercise as a cover to conduct the National Register of Citizens (NRC) drive, harassing common people in West Bengal.

Yadav said the SIR drive was being conducted exclusively in West Bengal ahead of assembly polls expected in the first half of 2026. "The responsibility of EC is to increase voter participation, but for the first time, it is being seen that EC and BJP, under the guise of SIR, are conducting NRC and harassing people to cut votes," he said.

Yadav lauded Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, claiming she is the main competitor to BJP nationally. He expressed confidence that the people of West Bengal would re-elect her. "In Bengal, they are harassing CM Mamata Banerjee in the name of SIR. I am confident she will become CM again. People of Bengal will defeat BJP," he said.

Mamata Banerjee also criticized the EC, alleging it was "snatching away" voters' rights and harassing people over supposed discrepancies in voter lists. She claimed the commission was acting at the behest of BJP, causing undue stress, especially to elderly and physically challenged citizens. She said the pressure led to deaths and suicides, calling the actions "unprecedented torture."

Both leaders accused the EC of undermining democratic rights and secular principles, arguing that its actions were politically motivated and designed to intimidate voters ahead of the elections.

# Delhi police recover stolen jewellery worth Rs 20L

**NEW DELHI**

The Delhi Police successfully solved a theft case and recovered a jewellery bag containing valuables worth around Rs 20 lakh, officials said on Tuesday.

An FIR under Section 303 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) was registered on January 22 at Kashmere Gate Metro Police Station following the complaint. The stolen bag contained gold jewellery and other items valued at approximately Rs 20 lakh.

Investigators examined CCTV footage from Chandni Chowk Metro Station, which showed a woman in a pink jacket and black pants allegedly taking the bag and boarding a train toward Millennium City Centre. Further CCTV review at Barakhamba Metro Station traced her journey to Noida Sector-52 Metro Station, where she exited through Gate No. 2.

The woman was also carrying a shopping bag from "Radhika Collection" in Chandni Chowk Market. Police contacted the shopkeeper, who helped identify and track the accused. She was apprehended and questioned.

The woman claimed she had mistakenly picked up the jewellery bag while shopping for her cousin's wedding and did not realize it belonged to someone else. However, she failed to explain why she did not return it after discovering the mistake.

Following her apprehension, the jewellery bag was recovered in safe condition. Police confirmed full recovery of all gold jewellery and valuables worth about Rs 20 lakh. The accused has no prior criminal record, and legal action will be taken under relevant law provisions.

# Ayodhya GST commissioner resigns over Shankaracharya controversy

**AYODHYA**

Ayodhya GST Commissioner Prashant Kumar Singh resigned on Tuesday amid a controversy involving the Uttar Pradesh government and Shankaracharya Swami Avimukteshwaranand. Singh said his resignation was in support of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, after being hurt by what he called baseless allegations against them over the last two days.

Singh said, "In favour of the government and to oppose Swami Avimukteshwaranand, I have resigned. I have certain moral responsibilities toward the government that pays my salary. When I saw that my CM and PM were being insulted, I sent my resignation to the Governor."

The controversy erupted during Mauni Amavasya at the Magh Mela, where Swami Avimukteshwaranand was reportedly stopped from taking the holy dip with his palanquin. The seer has since been protesting outside his camp.

This follows the earlier resignation of Bareilly city magistrate Alankar Agnihotri, who criticised government policies and alleged an "anti-Brahmin campaign" in Uttar Pradesh, citing mistreatment of Swami Avimukteshwaranand and his disciples. Agnihotri described incidents where elderly monks and disciples were allegedly beaten during the Magh Mela.

BJP leader Uma Bharti also weighed in, saying that demanding proof of Swami Avimukteshwaranand's Shankaracharya title was improper. She clarified her comments were not against CM Yogi Adityanath and called for a positive resolution between the seer and the government.

The resignations and controversy have highlighted tensions between religious authorities, government officials, and administrative protocols during major religious events in Uttar Pradesh.

### Uma Bharti slams UP government notice to Shankaracharya

**NEW DELHI:** Former Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister and BJP leader Uma Bharti on Tuesday said that demanding proof from Swami Avimukteshwaranand regarding his Shankaracharya title was a violation of propriety. She clarified that her remarks were not meant to show any disrespect toward Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath.

In an X post, Bharti wrote, "Don't harbour illusions against Yogi; my statement is not against Yogi ji. I hold respect, affection, and goodwill toward him. However, demanding proof of someone's status as Shankaracharya is a violation of propriety. Only the Shankaracharya or the scholarly council has the right to do that."

She further urged the government and Swami Avimukteshwaranand to reach a positive resolution. "I believe a positive resolution will emerge, but the administration demanding proof of his status crosses its limits. This right belongs solely to the Shankaracharyas and their council," she said.

Her comments come after an alleged attempt to stop the Swami from taking a holy dip at the Sangam during the Magh Mela. The Prayagraj administration denied the allegations, stating that the Shankaracharya arrived without prior permission with around 200 followers amid heavy crowding.

Earlier, BSP supremo Mayawati criticized political interference in religious events across the country, citing the Prayagraj dispute as an example. She called for quick resolution through mutual consensus and warned against linking religion with politics for narrow gains.

Bharti's remarks underline concerns over administrative overreach and the need to respect religious authorities' traditional rights in Uttar Pradesh.

**BLUE PORT INITIATIVE**

# *Centre approves smart fishing harbor in Andaman*

**NEW DELHI**

The Union Department of Fisheries has approved a proposal by the Andaman & Nicobar Administration to develop a smart and integrated fishing harbour at Mayabunder with an investment of Rs 199.24 crore.

The project, supported fully under the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY), will be developed in line with the Blue Port Initiative and equipped with the latest technology, including IoT-enabled systems.

The harbour will provide safe landing and berthing facilities for 430 fishing vessels and cater to an annual fish landing of around 9,900 tonnes. It will also integrate sustainable fisheries management, energy-efficient systems, enhanced fish-handling capacity, improved operational safety, and digital traceability. Officials said the project is expected to generate employment opportunities, increase stakeholder incomes, strengthen livelihoods, and help combat illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing while supporting India's progress towards Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The Andaman & Nicobar Islands have a vast marine resource base, covering six lakh sq. km of Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) and an estimated 60,000 tonnes of tuna and tuna-like species, including 24,000 tonnes of Yellowfin and 2,000 tonnes of Skipjack tuna. To attract investment, the Department of Fisheries held an Investors Meet on November 14, 2024, at Swaraj Dweep, highlighting opportunities in fisheries and aquaculture. A tuna cluster has also been notified to strengthen infrastructure, training, investor partnerships, and global competitiveness.

India's fisheries sector has seen robust growth, with public investments of over Rs 39,000 crore. Fish production has more than doubled in the last decade to around 197.75 lakh tonnes in 2024-25, while seafood exports have reached Rs 62,408 crore, supplied to nearly 130 countries. The Mayabunder harbour is expected to unlock the Islands' fisheries potential and support India's goal of one lakh crore seafood exports by 2030–31.

# Heavy snowfall: Srinagar-Jammu highway closed

**UDHAMPUR**

The strategic Jammu-Srinagar National Highway (NH-44) was closed in both directions on Tuesday due to heavy snowfall near the high-altitude Navyug Tunnel and continuous rainfall across Udhampur district. The suspension of traffic has left hundreds of vehicles stranded at multiple locations, with a major buildup reported at the Jakhani check naka in Udhampur.

Officials said slippery roads in the Banihal sector and snowfall near the Navyug Tunnel made travel unsafe, prompting authorities to halt vehicular movement to prevent accidents. Persistent rainfall in the lower reaches of Udhampur worsened driving conditions.

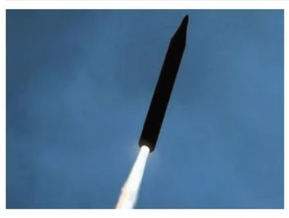
Deputy Superintendent of Police (Traffic), Udhampur, Pankaj Sudan, told that Kashmir-bound vehicles were being stopped beyond Jakhani due to the ongoing weather situation in Banihal. Authorities advised the public to postpone travel and check road conditions with official traffic units to avoid inconvenience or gridlock.

Traffic DTI Banihal Ajaz Mirza said fresh snowfall and icy roads made driving extremely risky. Police and concerned departments were deployed to manage the situation. Heavy to moderate snowfall was also reported in Gandoh-Bhalesa area of Doda district. SDM Gandoh warned residents not to venture into high-altitude areas due to avalanche risks.

Meanwhile, Srinagar Airport canceled several flights due to bad weather. As of 9 AM, six Indigo, two Air Akasa, and three Air India Express flights were canceled.

Meteorological Department officials predicted snowfall would continue in the region until January 29, urging travelers to exercise caution and avoid unnecessary travel in hilly areas.

## QUICK READ



### North Korea Fires Missiles Towards Sea Of Japan

**Seoul**

North Korea fired two ballistic missiles towards the Sea of Japan on Tuesday, officials from Japan and South Korea said. Japan confirmed the missiles landed outside its economic zone, while South Korea detected a projectile towards the East Sea. This is Pyongyang's second launch this month. Analysts say the tests aim to improve strike capabilities, challenge allies, and possibly sell weapons abroad. The launches come ahead of a major ruling party congress and expansion of missile production.

### Saudi Arabia Halts Mukaab Megaproject Construction

**Riyadh**

Saudi Arabia has paused work on the Mukaab, a massive cube-shaped skyscraper in Riyadh, sources said. The 400-meter metal cube with a giant AI-powered dome is part of the New Murabba development. Officials are reviewing financing and feasibility. The halt reflects a shift from costly futuristic projects under Vision 2030 toward more urgent, profitable plans. Focus is now on World Expo 2030, the 2034 World Cup, Diriyah cultural zone, and Qiddiya tourism megaproject, insiders added.

### 'Nihilist' Penguin Walks Alone Into Mountains

**Antarctica**

A lone penguin walking away from its colony has gone viral online. The clip, from Werner Herzog's 2007 documentary Encounters at the End of the World, shows the bird waddling toward mountains about 70 km from the ocean. Social media users call it the "Nihilist Penguin" due to eerie music and captions highlighting its solitary journey where survival is impossible. The footage captures the penguin leaving food and company behind, sparking fascination and discussions about nature and life.

# Brazil Seeks Stronger Trade Ties With India Strategically

Brazil opened a business office in India to boost trade, diversify exports, and strengthen political and economic ties

**SAO PAULO**

Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva will lead a high-level delegation to India from February 19 to 21, aiming to strengthen trade, attract investment, and build strategic partnerships. This visit reflects Brazil's plan to reduce reliance on traditional partners like the US and China while boosting ties with emerging economies. Nearly 150 business leaders will join the mission, highlighting growing corporate interest in India's market.

The visit comes after Vice President Geraldo Alckmin

and Defence Minister Jose Mucio Monteiro visited India in October 2025. Talks then focused on defence cooperation, trade expansion, and the Mercosur-India Preferential Trade Agreement. Political engagement has also increased, with Lula and Prime Minister Narendra Modi recently discussing UN reforms and international collaboration.

Brazil recently opened a business office in India to diversify exports, which are heavily focused on crude oil. India is now Brazil's tenth-largest export destination and sixth-largest import source. Bilateral trade grew strongly in 2025, with exports rising 30.2% and imports increasing 21.9%, though Brazil recorded a USD 1.5 billion trade deficit. Agriculture will also be highlighted, with technical cooperation in family farming included in the delegation's agenda.

Preparations are intensive, with Brazil renting a 500-seat auditorium in India to meet business leaders and showcase investment opportunities. Officials say the visit will not only boost the economy but also reinforce President Lula's image as a global leader asserting Brazil's interests on the world stage. The mission marks one of the largest overseas delegations of the current administration, signaling the country's commitment to expanding international partnerships beyond traditional alliances.

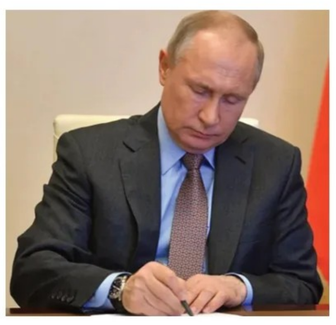
# Putin Praises India On 77th Republic Day

**MOSCOW**

Russian President Vladimir Putin sent warm greetings to President Droupadi Murmu and Prime Minister Narendra Modi on India's 77th Republic Day. He praised India's achievements in social, economic, scientific, and technical fields, saying the country "rightfully occupies its place among the leading world powers" and commands high respect internationally.

Recalling his December 2025 visit to India, Putin noted that discussions with Indian leaders reaffirmed the growth of the special and privileged strategic partnership between Moscow and New Delhi. He expressed confidence that bilateral cooperation would continue to strengthen across all sectors and that both countries would work together on regional and global issues, supporting a fair multipolar world order.

In December, PM Modi met Putin at Hyderabad House, where they discussed boosting ties in economy, defence, and trade. Modi highlighted the enduring strength of India-Russia relations, thanking Putin for his consistent friendship and commitment. He recalled milestones in their partnership, including the establishment of the strategic partnership 25 years ago and its



**Russian President Putin congratulates India on its 77th Republic Day, highlighting its global achievements and strong India-Russia strategic partnership**

elevation to a Special Privileged Strategic Partnership in 2010.

Putin concluded his message wishing good health and happiness to the people of India. Both leaders emphasized that their nations' long-standing relationship remains a model of cooperation, guided by mutual respect, shared interests, and a vision for global stability and development.

The greetings come as India continues to strengthen its international presence, with Russia recognizing its role as a leading power on the global stage and reaffirming the importance of strategic collaboration between the two countries.

## Balochistan Observes Genocide Remembrance Day With Seminars

**QUETTA**

People across Balochistan and Baloch-populated areas observed January 25 with seminars, vigils, and awareness campaigns to mark "Baloch Genocide Remembrance Day," organised by the Baloch Yakjehti Committee (BYC). The day honours victims of enforced disappearances, extrajudicial killings, and other alleged human rights abuses.

In Quetta, a seminar focused on the 2014 discovery of mass graves in Tootak, Khuzdar, considered a symbol of suffering for families of forcibly disappeared persons. Relatives shared testimonies about years of uncertainty, psychological distress, and financial hardship. Family members of detained BYC leaders accused authorities of using the law to suppress peaceful dissent. Speakers highlighted arrests of activists, including Dr. Mahrang Baloch, Beebow Baloch, Gulzadi Baloch, Shaji Baloch, and Beebarg Baloch, noting a worsening human rights climate. The seminar concluded with a call for international attention and continued resolve against persecution.

In Taunsa, Koh-e-Sulaiman, a peaceful demonstration commemorated victims of alleged state-backed projects, uranium mining, and environmental degradation. Photographs of cancer victims were displayed with flowers and candles, highlighting concerns about nuclear-related activities and limited healthcare. Participants noted the region's lack of hospitals, schools, and essential services.

*The US has indicated Ukraine's security guarantees could depend on agreeing to a peace deal ceding Donbas*

# US Security Guarantees Linked To Donbas Peace Deal

**WASHINGTON**

The Trump administration has reportedly signaled that US security guarantees for Ukraine may be linked to Kyiv agreeing to a peace deal likely requiring the country to cede control of the Donbas region to Russia, familiar with the discussions. Washington also suggested it could provide additional weapons to strengthen Ukraine's peacetime army if Kyiv withdraws forces from eastern areas it currently controls.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said on Sunday that a US document on security guarantees is "100 per cent ready," but the country is still awaiting a date and location for signing. Zelenskyy has emphasized that any

peace agreement must uphold Ukraine's territorial integrity. A senior Ukrainian official expressed concerns that Washington has been slow to finalize guarantees, saying the US "stops each time the security guarantees can be signed."

Kyiv wants security guarantees confirmed before conceding any land, but the US reportedly views the Donbas as central to ending the war and is not pressuring Russia to change its position. White House deputy press secretary Anna Kelly denied that the US is forcing territorial concessions, stating the US role is to help both sides reach an agreement. A source familiar with Washington's stance added that security guarantees would depend on both parties agreeing to a peace deal.

Meanwhile, the Kremlin reaffirmed that territory remains a key issue in ending the conflict, following talks in Abu Dhabi. As discussions continue, uncertainty remains over whether Ukraine can secure US guarantees without making territorial compromises, highlighting the complexity of negotiating a lasting resolution to the war.

# Balochistan Employees Protest Demands Disparity Reduction Allowance

**QUETTA**

Government employees in Balochistan held protest rallies in Quetta and Khuzdar on Tuesday, demanding the grant of the long-pending Disparity Reduction Allowance (DRA. Workers from the Balochistan Employees Grand Alliance (BEGA) marched from Bacha Khan Chowk to the City Police Station in Quetta, where they staged a sit-in and raised slogans against the government for not meeting their demands. Police said 11 participants voluntarily presented themselves for arrest.

In Khuzdar, a separate rally was led by BEGA district leaders, including Aslam Notani, Manzoor Naushad, Aslam Zahri, Rashid Ahmed Ghulamani, and Rashida Zahri. Employees from various government departments joined, expressing frustration over delays in implementing their demands. Protests have disrupted work in many offices in recent days. Authorities had blocked the Red Zone in Quetta, set up road barriers, and suspended mobile internet to prevent the gathering.

Earlier on January 22, the Unemployed Pharmacists' Action Committee (UPAC) criticised the government for announcing only limited vacancies for over 2,000 unemployed pharmacists. UPAC General Secretary Qasim Aziz Mengal called the move "unacceptable" and urged merit-based recruitment and the creation of more positions. He accused the health department of favouring certain candidates through walk-in interviews and highlighted the absence of pharmacy departments in private hospitals.

The recent unrest follows the arrest of dozens of employees on January 20, when police blocked a sit-in in the Red Zone. Despite heavy security, protesters continued gathering outside the Quetta Press Club, demanding fair implementation of allowances and transparent recruitment processes.

The protests reflect growing dissatisfaction among Balochistan's government employees over delayed allowances, limited job opportunities, and perceived lack of transparency in recruitment, highlighting tensions between authorities and public sector workers in the province.

# Washington State Senate Officially Honours India Republic Day

**WASHINGTON**

In a special session, the Washington State Senate adopted Resolution Number 8674 on January 26, 2026, celebrating India's 77th Republic Day. The resolution was introduced by Indian American Senator Manka Dhingra and supported by Senator Vandana Slatter, along with other senators praising India as the world's largest democracy and emphasizing strong India-US friendship.

The Senate session began with verses from the Taittareeya Upanishad and concluded with a luncheon hosted by the Indian Consul General in Seattle. The event featured addresses by senators and a Bharatnatyam dance recital by artist Anwesha Das commemorating 150 years of Vande Mataram.

Earlier, South Dakota Governor Larry Rhoden extended greetings to India, proclaiming January 26, 2026, as "Republic Day of India" and expressing confidence that India-US ties will grow stronger. Similarly, Washington Governor Bob Ferguson and Alaska Governor Mike Dunleavy officially recognized the day, encouraging residents to honour Indian and Indian American communities and the enduring bonds with

India.

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio also extended his greetings, highlighting the historic partnership between India and the United States. He noted ongoing cooperation in defence, energy, critical minerals, and emerging technologies. Rubio emphasized the multi-layered engagement through the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QUAD) and said the partnership has delivered significant benefits for both countries and the Indo-Pacific region. He expressed eagerness to advance shared objectives in the coming year.

The celebrations in the United States reflect deepening bilateral ties and the recognition of India's achievements and contributions globally. From legislative sessions and gubernatorial proclamations to cultural performances, officials across multiple states joined in celebrating India's Republic Day, highlighting the enduring friendship between the US and India.

## SU DO KU

**Brain-Bender: Can You Solve It?**

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Solutions to Yesterday's puzzle

**Fill a 9×9 grid with numbers so that each row, column and 3×3 section contain all of the digits between 1 and 9.**

**EBOLA MUTATION**

# *Chinese Scientists Discover Critical Ebola Virus Mutation*

**BEIJING**

Chinese researchers have identified a key mutation in the Ebola virus that increased its infectivity during the 2018–2020 outbreak in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). This outbreak, the second-largest in history, caused over 3,000 infections and more than 2,000 deaths.

Published in the journal Cell, the study analyzed 480 complete Ebola virus genomes. Researchers found a mutation in the viral glycoprotein, called GP-V75A, which emerged early in the epidemic. This variant rapidly replaced the original strain, closely matching the rise in cases, suggesting it gave the virus a transmission advantage.

Professor Qian Jun of Sun Yat-sen University said real-time genome surveillance and evolutionary analysis are essential during outbreaks. "It helps warn of changes in transmission risk and assess the effectiveness of drugs and vaccines," he explained. Experiments confirmed that GP-V75A increased the virus's ability to infect different host cells and mice.

The study also revealed that the mutation reduced the effectiveness of some antiviral antibodies and entry inhibitors, raising concerns about potential drug resistance. These findings highlight the need for ongoing monitoring of viral evolution during outbreaks.

Professor Jun emphasized that understanding how viral mutations drive transmission can help authorities adjust control strategies in advance. He added that insights from such research are crucial not only for Ebola but also for preparing for future emerging infectious diseases.

The study underscores the importance of global genomic surveillance, rapid response, and the development of broad-spectrum therapies to counter evolving viral threats. By identifying dangerous mutations like GP-V75A, scientists aim to improve epidemic preparedness and guide the design of more effective vaccines and treatments for Ebola and other viral diseases.

## QUICK READ

### EU Luxury Cars to Become Cheaper in India

**New Delhi**

European luxury cars like Mercedes-Benz, BMW, Audi, Ferrari, Lamborghini, Rolls-Royce, and Bentley are set to become cheaper in India. This follows the India-European Union Free Trade Agreement announced at the 16th India-EU Summit on Tuesday. Under the deal, India will gradually reduce tariffs on EU cars to 10% within a quota system. The agreement aims to benefit consumers, support domestic manufacturing, and promote "Make in India" projects and future car exports to Europe.

### Adani, Embraer Collaborate on Aircraft Manufacturing

**New Delhi**

Adani Group and Brazil's Embraer have announced a strategic partnership to assemble regional transport aircraft in India. The collaboration aims to improve air connectivity to Tier 2 and 3 cities and promote technology transfer, skill development, and a strong supply chain. A Final Assembly Line for regional jets, seating up to 150 passengers, will be set up. The venture marks India's push for self-reliance in aircraft manufacturing and strengthens Adani's presence in the civil aviation sector.

### Airfloa, Janatics Team Up for Rail Doors

**Chennai**

Airfloa Rail Technology has joined hands with Janatics Industrial Automation to develop Automatic Door Systems for modern trains, including Freight EMU and Vande Bharat coaches. The doors will include double-leaf and single-leaf plug doors, pocket sliding doors, and fire barrier doors. Airfloa will handle tenders, customer engagement, and project execution. The partnership strengthens Airfloa's expertise in key rail systems, supports future railway programs, and boosts the modernisation of India's rail coaches.

# INDIA-EU SIGN MAJOR SECURITY-DEFENCE DEAL

The partnership to boost cooperation in Indo-Pacific, counterterrorism, and defence industry collaboration.

**NEW DELHI**

India and the European Union (EU) signed a historic Security and Defence Partnership, aiming to enhance cooperation on security, defence, and global challenges.

EU Vice President Kaja Kallas said the agreement will launch an annual dialogue, deepen collaboration on maritime security, cyber issues, and counterterrorism, and explore India's participation in European defence initiatives.

MEA Spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal called the 16th India-EU Summit a landmark event. Leaders discussed trade, clean energy, digital technologies, AI, infrastructure, mobility, research, and security. The two sides concluded negotiations for a landmark India-EU Free Trade Agreement, adopted a joint strategic agenda "Towards 2030," and signed a mobility cooperation MoU.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh emphasized greater cooperation with EU nations.

The two sides also launched negotiations on an India-EU Security of Information Agreement to enable sharing of classified information and support closer defence ties. Existing Security and Defence Consultations will now become an annual EU-India Security and Defence Dialogue to institutionalize high-level engagement. Both parties will consult on defence initiatives and explore India's participation in EU defence programmes. To boost defence industrial collaboration, an industry-led India-EU Defence Industry Forum will be established, involving businesses and EU member states, to identify opportunities in defence manufacturing, technology, and innovation.

Kallas noted that partnerships like these strengthen global peace and security and are part of the EU's Strategic Compass to engage key global partners.

With this deal, India becomes the third Asian country, after Japan and South Korea, to sign such an EU security and defence pact.

# India Aims To Lead Global Semiconductor Industry

**India is set to develop its own semiconductor Intellectual Property in six key areas, aiming to become a major global chip nation by 2035, said Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw**

**NEW DELHI**

India is making rapid strides in semiconductor development through the India Semiconductor Mission. Union Minister for Electronics and IT, Ashwini Vaishnaw, said the country will create its own Intellectual Property (IP) in six critical systems: compute, RF, networking, power, sensor, and memory.

Speaking on the mission's progress, Vaishnaw highlighted that 10 projects are under construction, production will begin for four projects this year, and 24 startups have already designed semiconductor chips. Around 315 educational institutions have trained students in chip design. He said access to Electronic Design Automation (EDA) tools

under C-DAC has been crucial in helping India's chip designers move from theory to practical, working projects.

The Minister set a 24-month target for developing simpler standard IPs like USB and PCIe and suggested a 36-month timeline for analog IPs, critical for real-world and strategic applications. Vaishnaw emphasised that India has the talent, including experts from the diaspora, to achieve this. He also proposed creating a repository for standard IPs under the Design Linked Incentive (DLI) scheme, which could be mandated for chips used in India.

Vaishnaw said India is on track to become a major semiconductor player by 2029 and one of the world's most important semiconductor nations by 2035, marking a significant leap in the global chip industry.

*Shares of top Indian carmakers fell sharply after reports suggested planned tariff cuts on European imports*

# Indian Carmakers Drop On European Tariff Cut Report

**NEW DELHI**

Shares of India's leading carmakers dropped sharply on Tuesday following reports that the government is set to slash tariffs on European car imports under a potential India-EU free trade deal. Mahindra & Mahindra shares fell as much as 5.1 percent, reaching their lowest level since August 2025, while Maruti Suzuki and Tata Motors Passenger Vehicles fell 2.95 percent and 2 percent respectively. The Nifty Auto Index was down 2.2 percent.

According to sources, India plans to reduce import duties on EU cars from up to 110 percent to 40 percent. The cut will initially apply to cars with an import price above 15,000 euros ($17,739). The move would benefit European automakers such as Volkswagen, Renault, Stellantis, and luxury brands Mercedes-Benz and BMW.

Indian manufacturers have opposed the cuts, arguing that lower tariffs would make imports more competitive and discourage investment in local production. Currently, European carmakers hold less than 4 percent of India's 4.4-million-unit annual car market, which is dominated by Maruti Suzuki, Mahindra, and Tata, together accounting for about two-thirds of sales.

The potential tariff reduction highlights the government's push to strengthen trade ties with Europe, but it has rattled domestic carmakers who fear increased competition from foreign brands. Analysts say the move could reshape India's automotive market, creating opportunities for European players while challenging homegrown manufacturers to enhance competitiveness and innovation.

# Trump Threatens Higher Tariffs on South Korean Goods

**WASHINGTON**

US President Donald Trump threatened to increase tariffs on South Korean goods, including automobiles, lumber, and pharmaceuticals, claiming Seoul had not honoured a previous trade pact with the United States. The announcement was made on Trump's Truth Social platform, stating tariffs would rise from 15 percent to 25 percent. He said South Korea's legislature had not enacted the "historic trade agreement," calling it a failure to live up to the deal.

Seoul's Presidential office said it had not been informed about the proposed hike in advance. Trade Minister Kim Jung-kwan, currently in Canada, is expected to travel to Washington for discussions with U.S. Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick.

The announcement follows a trade and security agreement signed in October between Trump and South Korean President Lee Jae Myung, which included South Korean investment commitments and reduced U.S. tariffs on vehicles, auto parts, and pharmaceuticals. The agreement has not yet been fully implemented in Seoul, though officials maintain it does not require parliamentary approval.

The auto sector accounts for nearly 27 percent of South Korea's exports to the U.S., which takes almost half of its total car exports. Analysts warn that raising tariffs could hurt South Korea's competitiveness against countries such as Japan and the EU. So far, the Trump administration has not formally issued notices to implement the tariff changes.

## Silver and Gold Hit Record Highs on Strong Demand

**NEW DELHI**

Silver futures jumped to a record Rs 3.59 lakh per kilogram on Tuesday, while gold touched an all-time high of Rs 1.59 lakh per 10 grams, driven by strong investor demand amid persistent geopolitical and economic tensions.

On the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX), March silver contracts rose Rs 25,101, or 7.5 percent, after last week's 16.3 percent surge that first breached Rs 3 lakh per kilogram. Gold futures for February delivery gained Rs 3,783, or 2.42 percent, continuing a sharp rally of 9.5 percent over the previous week.

Analysts said the spike in bullion prices reflects a rush toward safe-haven assets, as global markets are rattled by trade tensions, geopolitical risks, and concerns over fiscal and policy credibility. Rahul Kalantri, VP Commodities at Mehta Equities, noted that investors' confidence in sovereign bonds and currencies is weakening, pushing them toward gold and silver.

Market watchers are also closely monitoring the upcoming Union Budget 2026, which may influence bullion sentiment through changes in import duties and fiscal measures.

In overseas trade, Comex silver futures fell 6.27 percent to USD 108.26 per ounce, while gold slipped 0.51 percent to USD 5,096.05 per ounce, after both touched record highs in the previous session. Investors continue to weigh global central bank policies and uncertainty over the US Federal Reserve's next steps.

The trend shows a clear shift of funds from bonds and currencies into tangible assets as investors hedge against market volatility and economic uncertainty.

# Nationwide Bank Strike Demands Immediate Five-Day Week

**NEW DELHI**

Bank employees across India went on a nationwide strike on Tuesday demanding the immediate implementation of a five-day work week. The strike, called by the United Forum of Bank Unions (UFBU), disrupted banking services including cash deposits, withdrawals, cheque clearances, and other routine transactions.

Employees in Gujarat's Vadodara, West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Punjab, Rajasthan, and Chandigarh joined the strike in large numbers. Protesters said their demand has been pending since 2015 and was repeatedly delayed despite memoranda and agreements with the Indian Banks' Association (IBA). Over 25,000 employees participated in Raipur, 10,000 in Ghazipur, and thousands more across other districts, causing major inconvenience to customers and businesses.

Union representatives highlighted that government departments, LIC, NABARD, and RBI already follow a five-day week, and employees want banks to align with this system. "The 12th Bipartite Settlement clearly stated that five-day banking would be implemented within six months, but it has been two years with no action," said PNB employee Ritika.

Bankers emphasised that the strike was not to stop work but to press for long-pending reforms. Protests included large gatherings, slogans, and display of posters outside bank premises in various states.

The agitation reflects frustration among over eight lakh employees nationwide over the delay in implementing a system that other financial and government institutions have already adopted. Customers faced significant disruption as many branches either closed or operated with minimal staff.

# Asian Paints Q3 Profit Falls amid Exceptional Costs

**MUMBAI**

Asian Paints reported a 4.8 per cent decline in its consolidated net profit for the quarter ended December 31, 2025. Net profit fell to about Rs 1,074 crore, down from Rs 1,128 crore in the same quarter last year. The company's revenue grew nearly 4 per cent year-on-year to Rs 8,867.02 crore, reflecting higher sales despite profitability being affected by certain exceptional costs of Rs 157.61 crore.

The exceptional items mainly included labour code provisions and an impairment loss following the acquisition

of Obgenix Software Private Limited, also called White Teak. On an operational basis, Asian Paints performed well. Profit before depreciation, interest, tax, other income, and exceptional items (PBDIT) rose 8.8 per cent to Rs 1,781 crore. PBDIT margin improved to 20.1 per cent from 19.2 per cent a year ago. Profit before exceptional items and tax increased 8.5 per cent to Rs 1,646.7 crore, while net profit before minority interest and exceptional items rose 7.7 per cent to Rs 1,215.7 crore.

Managing Director and CEO Amit Syngle said the results reflect sustained momentum across growth initiatives despite competitive pressure and subdued demand. The company has strengthened brand-building efforts, retail initiatives, and launched new products and services to drive growth.

Following the results announcement, Asian Paints shares fell around 4 per cent during intra-day trading, reflecting market reaction to the decline in net profit after accounting for exceptional items and minority interest.

**EU INVESTMENTS INDIA**

# *Over 95 Percent EU Firms Plan Expansion India*

**NEW DELHI**

Over 95 per cent of European Union (EU) businesses in India plan to expand their operations in the next five years, according to a survey by the Federation of European Business in India (FEBI). Companies cited strong domestic demand and sales growth as key reasons for expansion. Around 35 per cent of EU firms intend to invest €50 million or more each, reflecting broad-based investment across sectors.

Ninety per cent of respondents view India as a major driver of growth, offering opportunities as a market, a hub for research and development (R&D), and a production centre for exports. European companies are increasingly interested in both traditional manufacturing and emerging sectors such as artificial intelligence, digital technology, sustainability, and R&D. About 40 per cent are earmarking funds for Global Capability Centres, while 35 per cent plan to strengthen supply chains and sourcing in India.

Positive factors attracting

EU investment include political stability (64%), skilled manpower (54%), and cost-competitive manufacturing (70%). However, businesses highlighted challenges including regulatory approvals (71%), cumbersome customs (54%), complex taxation (41%), local content rules (39%), and quality control orders (37%). Proactive state governments were noted as key to attracting further foreign investment.

The announcement of the India-EU Free Trade Agreement (FTA) on Tuesday marks a historic milestone. The deal is expected to boost bilateral trade and investment, strengthen supply chains, and promote sustainable growth. India's goods trade with the EU reached ₹11.5 lakh crore (USD 136.5 billion) in 2024-25, while trade in services stood at ₹7.2 lakh crore (USD 83.1 billion). With the FTA and rising investments, India is becoming a central hub for European business growth in Asia.

# Healthy Everyday Foods That Support Better Living And Wellness

Eating simple, natural foods daily can improve health, energy levels, and overall quality of life

## Balanced Foods For Healthy Living

Fruits, vegetables, grains, proteins, and healthy fats form the foundation of a balanced a nd nourishing diet. These foods provide the body with essential vitamins, minerals, fiber, and energy needed for daily activities and long-term wellness. Many of them are easy to prepare, widely available, and suitable for people of all ages. Including a variety of natural foods in meals not only supports physical health but also helps prevent many common illnesses. Nutrition experts often recommend choosing fresh, minimally processed foods to gain the greatest benefits. From fruits and berries to dairy, seafood, and healthy oils, each food group plays a unique role in supporting the body.

## Fruits And Berries For Better Health

Fruits and berries are among the most popular health foods worldwide. They are naturally sweet, colorful, and packed with nutrients. Apples are especially valued because they contain fiber, vitamin C, and powerful antioxidants. They are filling and make a convenient snack between meals. Avocados stand out from most fruits due to their high healthy fat content. They are creamy, rich in fiber, potassium, and vitamin C, and can replace less healthy spreads or dressings. Bananas are known for potassium and vitamin B6, offering quick energy and easy portability. Blueberries are small but powerful, offering antioxidants that support overall health. Oranges are famous for vitamin C and also provide fiber and protective plant compounds. Strawberries are low in calories yet rich in vitamin C, fiber, and manganese, making them a nutritious dessert option. Other beneficial fruits include cherries, grapes, kiwi, mangoes, pears, pineapples, and raspberries, each contributing valuable nutrients.

## Eggs And Lean Meats Benefits

Eggs are another highly nutritious food that has gained renewed appreciation. Once feared for cholesterol content, eggs are now recognized as a valuable protein source with many benefits. They provide essential amino acids, vitamins, and minerals that support muscle strength, brain function, and overall health when eaten in moderation. Lean, unprocessed meats can also fit into a healthy diet. Lean beef provides high-quality protein and iron that the body absorbs easily. Chicken breast is low in fat and calories but rich in protein, potassium, and B vitamins, making it a favorite for balanced meals. Lamb and mutton, often grass-fed, contain beneficial omega-3 fatty acids that support heart health.

## Nuts And Seeds For Health

Nuts and seeds are small but powerful foods. Though high in calories, they contain healthy unsaturated fats that may lower the risk of heart disease and other conditions. They are filling, require little preparation, and add flavor and texture to meals. Almonds provide vitamin E, magnesium, fiber, and antioxidants that support heart health and digestion. Chia seeds are extremely nutrient dense, offering fiber, calcium, magnesium, and other minerals in small amounts. Coconuts supply fiber and medium-chain fats that can support energy needs. Macadamia nuts are rich in monounsaturated fats and have a smooth taste. Walnuts provide fiber, vitamins, and minerals and pair well with salads. Brazil nuts are especially rich in selenium, supporting thyroid health.

## Vegetables Packed With Essential Nutrients

Vegetables are among the most nutrient-dense foods available. Eating a wide variety of vegetables, especially in different colors, helps ensure a broad intake of vitamins and minerals. Asparagus is low in calories and rich in vitamin K. Bell peppers, available in several colors, are sweet, crunchy, and high in vitamin C and antioxidants. Broccoli provides fiber, vitamins C and K, and more protein than many vegetables. Carrots are sweet, crunchy, and rich in fiber, vitamin K, and carotene antioxidants. Cauliflower is versatile and can be roasted, added to curries, or eaten raw. Cucumbers are refreshing, low in calories, and mostly water, helping with hydration. Garlic adds strong flavor and contains compounds with antioxidant and antimicrobial effects. Kale is high in fiber, vitamins C and K, and adds texture to dishes. Onions contain bioactive compounds linked to health benefits. Tomatoes, though technically fruits, are commonly eaten as vegetables and provide potassium and vitamin C. Other vegetables such as cabbage, mushrooms, squash, and zucchini also offer valuable nutrients.

## Grains Breads And Legumes Benefits

Whole grains play an important role in a healthy diet by providing carbohydrates, fiber, and micronutrients. Brown rice is more nutritious than white rice, offering fiber, magnesium, and vitamin B1. Oats contain beta-glucans, fibers that help lower cholesterol and support gut health. Quinoa is a nutrient-rich grain that provides fiber, magnesium, and complete plant-based protein. Whole grain breads are generally healthier than refined white bread. They contain more fiber and nutrients and less added sugar. Ezekiel bread, made from sprouted grains and legumes, is a popular choice. Homemade low-carb or gluten-free breads allow better control over ingredients and can suit special dietary needs. Legumes are excellent plant-based protein sources that also provide iron and fiber. Proper preparation improves digestion and nutrient absorption. Green beans can be eaten as a side dish or added to salads. Kidney beans are rich in fiber and nutrients but must be cooked thoroughly. Lentils are high in fiber and protein and are widely used in many cuisines. Peanuts, though technically legumes, are rich in nutrients and antioxidants and may support weight management when eaten mindfully.

## Fish And Seafood For Health

Fish and seafood are important sources of protein, omega-3 fatty acids, and iodine. Regular consumption of oily fish is linked to improved heart and brain health. Salmon is rich in protein, omega-3 fats, and vitamin D. Sardines are small but packed with calcium, vitamin D, and other nutrients. Shellfish like clams and oysters are nutrient dense and should be sourced carefully. Shrimp is low in fat, high in protein, and provides zinc. Trout is similar to salmon in taste and nutrition. Tuna is low in calories, high in protein, and useful for those managing weight, especially when low-mercury varieties are chosen.

## Tubers And Simple Healthy Additions

Tubers such as potatoes and sweet potatoes are filling and nutrient rich. Potatoes provide potassium, vitamin C, and fiber when eaten with the skin. They are less energy dense and can support weight management. Sweet potatoes are rich in antioxidants, beta carotene, and vitamin A and can be prepared in many ways. Apple cider vinegar is often used as a salad dressing and may help regulate blood sugar levels when consumed with meals, though more research is needed. Dark chocolate contains flavonoid antioxidants that may support heart health, but it should be enjoyed in moderation mainly for pleasure rather than health benefits. Together, these foods demonstrate that healthy eating does not require complexity or extreme restrictions. Choosing a wide range of natural, whole foods and enjoying them in balanced portions can support long-term health, energy, and well-being for people everywhere.

## COMMON TYPES OF UNHEALTHY FOODS

***Not all unhealthy foods are obvious. Many are marketed as "quick snacks" or "energy boosters," but they are often high in calories and low in nutrients. Some examples include:***

- **Sugary Beverages:** Drinks like sodas, packaged fruit juices, and energy drinks contain high amounts of added sugar. A single can of soda may have up to 40 grams of sugar, exceeding the daily recommended limit. These beverages cause blood sugar spikes and can contribute to insulin resistance over time.
- **Fried Foods:** Foods like samosas, French fries, and pakoras are deep-fried in oils high in trans fats. Trans fats increase bad cholesterol (LDL) and lower good cholesterol (HDL), raising the risk of heart disease. Regular consumption of fried foods can also lead to weight gain.
- **Processed Meats:** Bacon, sausages, and ham are rich in nitrates, salt, and preservatives. Eating these meats frequently is linked to a higher risk of heart disease and certain cancers, making them a food group to limit.
- **Refined Grains:** White rice, white bread, and pastries are stripped of fiber and micronutrients during processing. These foods digest quickly, causing rapid blood sugar fluctuations and leaving you hungry sooner.
- **Packaged Snacks:** Instant noodles, potato chips, and flavored popcorn often contain excessive salt, refined oils, and artificial flavorings. Frequent consumption may negatively affect heart and digestive health.
- **Sugary Desserts:** Cakes, doughnuts, and ice creams combine added sugar and trans fats. Over time, these foods can increase the risk of insulin resistance, obesity, and fatty liver disease.
- **Fast Foods:** Burgers, pizzas, and fried chicken are high in calories, sodium, and unhealthy fats. Eating fast food regularly contributes to obesity, high blood pressure, and other metabolic disorders.
- **Highly Processed Dairy Products:** Cheese spreads and whipped creams often contain high sodium, stabilizers, and saturated fats, which can raise cholesterol levels.
- **High-Sugar Breakfast Cereals:** Some cereals marketed as healthy contain more sugar than desserts and very little fiber, making them poor choices for regular consumption.

Each of these foods contributes extra calories without providing essential nutrients, often replacing healthier options in daily meals.

## Health Risks of Eating Unhealthy Foods

***Eating unhealthy foods regularly can affect both physical and mental well-being. The major risks include:***

- **Obesity and Weight Gain:** High-calorie, low-fiber foods encourage fat storage, especially around the abdomen. Over time, this can lead to obesity and associated health problems.
- **Heart Disease:** Saturated and trans fats contribute to plaque buildup in arteries, raising the risk of heart attack and stroke.
- **Type 2 Diabetes:** Excess sugar intake can cause insulin resistance, making it harder for the body to regulate blood sugar.
- **Digestive Issues:** Refined and processed foods often lack fiber, leading to constipation, bloating, and poor gut health.
- **Fatty Liver Disease:** Diets high in added sugars and refined oils can cause fat accumulation in the liver, increasing the risk of non-alcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD).
- **Weakened Immunity:** Nutrient deficiencies from poor diets reduce the body's ability to fight infections effectively.
- **Cognitive Decline:** Diets high in processed foods have been linked to memory problems and an increased risk of cognitive decline.
- **Depression and Anxiety:** Unhealthy foods can disrupt the gut-brain axis and serotonin production, affecting mood and energy.

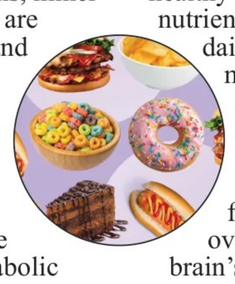
**Dental Decay:** Sugary foods feed bacteria in the mouth, leading to enamel erosion and cavities.Long-term consumption of unhealthy foods can contribute to lifestyle diseases such as hypertension, metabolic syndrome, and even some cancers.

## Dairy And Healthy Fats Guide

Dairy products can be valuable for those who tolerate them. Cheese provides protein and flavor but should be eaten in moderation due to fat content. Dairy milk supplies calcium, protein, and vitamins, and moderate consumption is linked to lower cardiovascular risk. Yogurt offers similar benefits with the added advantage of probiotic bacteria that support gut health. Healthy fats and oils are essential in balanced eating patterns. Extra-virgin olive oil is rich in monounsaturated fats and antioxidants that support heart health. Coconut oil contains medium-chain fats and should be used in moderation due to its effect on cholesterol levels.

## Unhealthy Foods That Harm Your Body And Health

Unhealthy foods are items that provide a lot of calories but very few essential nutrients such as vitamins, minerals, and fiber. They are usually processed and contain added sugars, refined flour, saturated or trans fats, artificial colors, and preservatives. These additives can disrupt the body's natural metabolic processes and lead to various health problems over time.



Unlike natural foods like fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lean proteins, unhealthy foods often replace nutrient-rich choices in our daily diets. Some of the most common unhealthy foods include soft drinks, chips, instant noodles, bakery desserts, and fast food. These foods can overstimulate the brain's reward system, increasing cravings and encouraging habitual consumption. Regular intake of these items can lead to overeating, weight gain, and deficiencies in essential nutrients. They may also increase the risk of serious health conditions such as diabetes, hypertension, heart disease, and fatty liver. Experts recommend that added sugars should not exceed 10% of total daily calories, emphasizing the importance of replacing these foods with natural, whole options to maintain balanced energy levels and overall health.

# Ex-FIFA president Sepp Blatter joins calls for boycott of US World Cup

## Concerns grow over travel bans, immigration policies, political climate ahead tournament

**WASHINGTON**

Former FIFA president Sepp Blatter has added his voice to growing international calls for a boycott of World Cup matches scheduled to be held in the United States, questioning the country's suitability as a host under President Donald Trump's administration.

Blatter, who led world football's governing body from 1998 to 2015, expressed his support for a proposed fan boycott in a post on X. He endorsed remarks made by Swiss anti-corruption expert Mark Pieth, who last week urged supporters to avoid travelling to the United States for the tournament.

"I think Mark Pieth is right to question this World Cup," Blatter wrote, quoting Pieth's comments. Pieth, a white-collar crime specialist, chaired FIFA's Independent Governance Committee during reform efforts a decade ago.

Pieth advised fans to stay away, warning that visitors could face harsh treatment by US authorities. "If they don't please the officials, they'll be put straight on the next flight home," Pieth said, adding that fans would be better off watching the tournament on television.

The United States is set to co-host the World Cup alongside Canada and Mexico from June 11 to July 19. However, concerns within the international football community have intensified due to the Trump administration's domestic and foreign policies, including strict immigration enforcement, aggressive handling of protests, and an expansionist posture on issues such as Greenland.

Recent travel bans have further fuelled criticism. Earlier this month, the US announced restrictions that would effectively prevent fans from Senegal and Ivory Coast from travelling to follow their teams unless they already hold valid visas. The administration cited "screening and vetting deficiencies" as the reason. Supporters from Iran and Haiti, both World Cup qualifiers, are also barred under earlier iterations of the ban.

Oke Göttlich, a vice-president of the German Football Association, told last week that the time had come to seriously consider a boycott.

Blatter's intervention is significant, given his long association with FIFA, despite his resignation in 2015 amid corruption investigations. His comments add weight to a debate that could intensify as the tournament draws closer, potentially overshadowing preparations for one of football's showpiece events.

# Spain to host 2030 WC final, federation president asserts confidently

**Spanish football chief claims decisive match will be staged in country, despite FIFA silence.**

**MADRID**

Spain will host the final of the 2030 World Cup, according to Spanish football federation president Rafael Louzán, who expressed confidence that the tournament's showpiece match will be played on Spanish soil despite FIFA yet to make an official announcement.

Speaking to reporters at a media event, Louzán said Spain would take the lead role in the World Cup co-hosted by Spain, Portugal and Morocco, adding that the final would be staged in his country. He did not specify the city or stadium that would host the title clash.

"Spain will lead the World Cup and the final will be held here," Louzán said, without offering further details.

FIFA has so far refrained from confirming the venue for the final of the expanded tournament, which will mark the 100th anniversary of the World Cup. Spanish media have long touted Real Madrid's recently renovated Santiago Bernabeu Stadium as the most likely host for the final, given its modern infrastructure and global profile.

However, there had been growing speculation in recent months that Morocco could stage the final at the under-construction Hassan II Stadium near Casablanca. The venue, expected to be completed in 2028, is designed to hold up to 115,000 spectators, making it the largest football stadium in the world.

Morocco's hopes may have been dented by organizational issues surrounding the recent Africa Cup of Nations final, which drew criticism and raised concerns about readiness for hosting a World Cup final. Those issues reportedly weakened Morocco's bid for the tournament's decisive match. Barcelona could also enter the race, having completed major renovations to the Camp Nou, one of Europe's most iconic stadiums.

The 2030 World Cup will be unique in its geographic spread, with Uruguay, Argentina and Paraguay each hosting one match to commemorate the centenary of the inaugural 1930 World Cup, which was held in Uruguay.

# ISL: From Manipur to Madras, Chennaiyin FC sign Imran Khan

**CHENNAI**

Two-time Indian Super League (ISL) champions Chennaiyin FC have strengthened their Indian contingent by signing seasoned attacker Imran Khan until the end of the ongoing season. The 30-year-old Manipur-born forward brings with him a wealth of top-flight experience as the Marina Machans gear up for the new campaign beginning February 14.

Imran has made over 130 appearances across various levels of Indian football since making his professional debut in 2013. He has previously plied his trade with ISL clubs Jamshedpur FC and FC Goa, establishing himself as a reliable performer known for his work rate, tactical intelligence and adaptability.

Usually deployed as a left-winger, Imran is capable of operating across multiple positions in the attacking third. His ability to contribute both offensively and defensively has made him a valuable asset in different tactical systems over the years, earning him a reputation as a dependable team player.

Expressing his delight after signing the contract, Imran said he was excited to begin a new chapter with Chennaiyin FC and reunite with head coach Clifford Miranda. "I'm thrilled to be part of this new project and to add a new chapter in my career with the Marina Machans. I've worked with Clifford Sir before and I'm really looking forward to working with him again," he said.

Head coach Clifford Miranda welcomed the signing, highlighting Imran's experience and left-footed ability as key factors. "Imran had a very good season last year and played a decisive role in his team's run to the semifinals. His inclusion strengthens our squad, especially on the wings, and gives us more attacking options from half spaces," Miranda said.

By securing Imran Khan's services, Chennaiyin FC have further bolstered their Indian core ahead of the season. The attacker is expected to join the squad immediately as the club continues preparations for the upcoming ISL campaign.

# Sabalenka beats 18-year-old Jovic to reach Australian Open semifinals; Zverev advances

**World number one powers on as heat-hit Melbourne witnesses contrasting quarterfinal battles**

**MELBOURNE**

Top-ranked Aryna Sabalenka continued her dominant run at the Australian Open, brushing aside 18-year-old Iva Jovic 6-3, 6-0 to reach the semifinals on a scorching Day 10 in Melbourne, while Alexander Zverev also advanced to the final four with a hard-fought win over rising American Learner Tien.

Sabalenka's quarterfinal was the only one played outdoors before extreme heat forced matches under cover. Temperatures soared past 42 degrees Celsius, but the Belarusian showed little discomfort as she asserted control early against the 29th-seeded Jovic, who was making her first Grand Slam quarterfinal appearance. The two-time defending champion surged to a 3-0 lead in the opening set and never relinquished her grip. Jovic fought back gamely, creating three break points in a lengthy ninth game of the first set, but Sabalenka's power and composure held firm. She saved all five break points she faced and sealed the match emphatically with consecutive aces.

"These teenagers have tested me in the last couple of rounds," Sabalenka said, praising Jovic's resilience. "Don't look at the score. She played incredible tennis and pushed me to be better."

Sabalenka, runner-up in Melbourne last year, is now eyeing her third Australian Open title in four years, having lifted the trophy in 2023 and 2024.

Earlier under the closed roof at Rod Laver Arena, third seed Alexander Zverev booked his place in the semifinals with a 6-3, 6-7 (5), 6-1, 7-6 (3) victory over 20-year-old Learner Tien. Zverev fired 24 aces and committed just one double fault in a match marked by big serving and momentum swings. The German, last year's finalist, reached his 10th Grand Slam semifinal.

# Red Bull Parts Ways with Christian Horner after 20 Years

**ENGLAND**

Red Bull Racing announced the departure of longtime team principal Christian Horner, ending a remarkable 20-year tenure that saw the team secure eight drivers' titles and six constructors' championships. The team did not provide a reason for the decision but expressed gratitude, saying Horner would "forever remain an important part of our team history."

Horner, who led Red Bull since the team entered Formula 1 as a full constructor in 2005, guided Sebastian Vettel to four titles and Max Verstappen to four more. Despite these successes, Red Bull's recent performance has dipped, with McLaren dominating the season and Red Bull placed fourth in the constructors' standings. Verstappen currently sits third in driver standings, with his future at the team still uncertain.

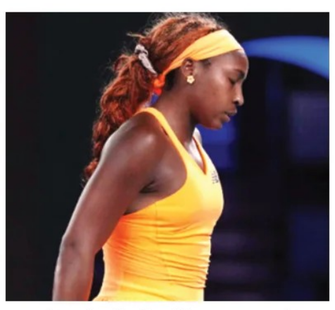
Laurent Mekies, currently of sister team Racing Bulls, will assume Horner's role as Red Bull's chief executive.

**AUSTRALIAN OPEN**

# Gauff Defends Racquet Smash, Questions Its Broadcast

**MELBOURNE**

Coco Gauff defended her post-match racquet smash after a heavy 6-1, 6-2 quarter-final defeat to Elina Svitolina at the Australian Open, saying it was necessary to release frustration but expressed disappointment it was caught on camera.



The world number three, 21, left centre court visibly dejected after the loss. Television images showed her repeatedly smashing her racquet in a stadium corridor. "I just took the minute to go and do that. I don't think it's a bad thing. I need to let out that emotion, otherwise I'm snappy with people around me," Gauff said.

She added she had tried to avoid cameras, noting, "I tried to go somewhere where I thought there wasn't a camera… maybe some conversations can be had because I feel like at this tournament the only private place we have is the locker room."

Despite her defeat, Gauff praised Svitolina, saying, "Credit it to her because she forced me to play like that… bad days are often caused by your opponent. She did well."

Gauff, a two-time major winner, reflected on past incidents, mentioning a racquet break in the French Open's round of 16, and said she tries to avoid displaying such emotions publicly, especially in front of children.

Svitolina, seeded 12th, will face world number one Aryna Sabalenka in the semi-finals on Thursday, with Gauff emphasizing the importance of crediting opponents for their performance while managing personal frustration.

*Extreme temperatures force roof closures and disrupt play at Melbourne Park*

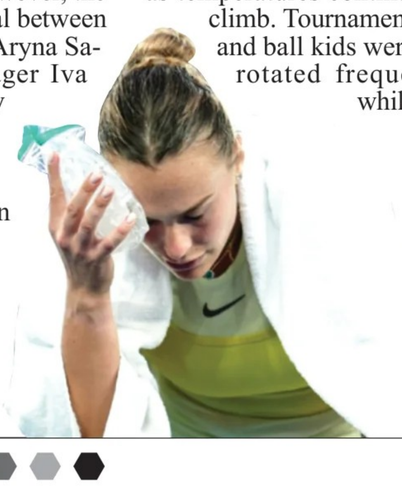
# *Australian Open triggers maximum heat warning amid 45°C forecast in Melbourne*

**MELBOURNE**

The Australian Open was hit by severe weather disruption on Tuesday after tournament organisers activated the highest level of their heat stress scale, with temperatures forecast to soar to a blistering 45 degrees Celsius. The extreme conditions prompted officials to close the roof at Rod Laver Arena and suspend play on outdoor courts as player and spectator safety took priority.

The Melbourne major reached level five — the maximum on its heat stress rating — for the second time in just four days. The scale is designed to protect players, fans and officials from dangerous heat exposure during the tournament. Under the protocol, matches scheduled on show courts are played indoors with retractable roofs closed, while all outdoor play is halted.

As a result, Rod Laver Arena, which is hosting all four quarter-final matches of the day, was sealed off from the oppressive heat. However, the opening quarter-final between world number one Aryna Sabalenka and teenager Iva Jovic had already begun under clear skies and blazing sunshine.



Sabalenka went on to secure victory, but the match concluded in punishing conditions, with the temperature still hovering around 38°C. Players were given extended breaks, ice towels and additional hydration as officials closely monitored their wellbeing.

All matches scheduled on outside courts, including junior boys' and girls' events, were suspended indefinitely as temperatures continued to climb. Tournament staff and ball kids were also rotated frequently, while fans were advised to seek shade and use water misting stations set up across Melbourne Park.

Saturday had already offered a preview of the heat's impact, when temperatures reached 40°C and play on outdoor courts was paused for nearly five hours. With forecasts again predicting extreme heat, organisers remain on high alert and prepared to enforce further delays if conditions worsen.

The Australian Open is known for its challenging summer conditions, but this year's tournament has tested the limits of its heat management protocols, underscoring the growing challenges major sporting events face amid increasingly extreme weather patterns.

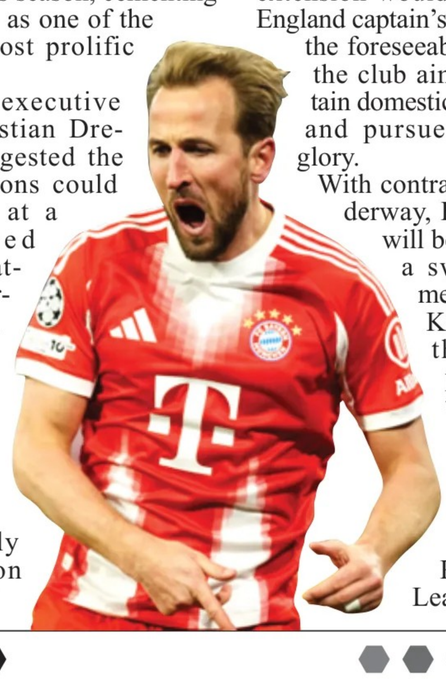
# Bayern Munich Opens Contract Talks with Harry Kane amid Stellar Form

**FRANKFURT**

Bayern Munich has confirmed it has begun discussions to extend the contract of England captain Harry Kane, who joined the Bundesliga giants from Tottenham in 2023. Kane's current deal runs until the end of next season.

The 33-year-old striker has thrived in Germany, helping Bayern win the Bundesliga last season — Kane's first major trophy — and finishing as the league's top scorer twice since his arrival. This season, he has already netted 21 goals in 19 Bundesliga games and is on course to challenge Robert Lewandowski's single-season record of 41 goals.

Bayern board member for sport Max Eberl said, "We're talking and it's clear to everyone that there has to be a decision at some stage… We're talking with Harry." Kane has scored 119 goals in 126 games for Bayern and 34 in 30 matches across all competitions this season, cementing his status as one of the club's most prolific forwards.



Chief executive Jan-Christian Dreesen suggested the negotiations could proceed at a measured pace, stating, "Harry has a lot of trust. He feels very good in Munich. We have absolutely no reason to hurry."

Kane's consistent form, leadership qualities, and record-breaking goal-scoring feats have made him a pivotal figure in Bayern's attack. An extension would secure the England captain's services for the foreseeable future as the club aims to maintain domestic dominance and pursue European glory.

With contract talks underway, Bayern fans will be hoping for a swift agreement, ensuring Kane remains the centerpiece of the team that has revitalized his career since leaving the Premier League.

## Devdutt Padikkal replaces Mayank Agarwal as K'taka captain

**BENGALURU**

Karnataka selectors have made a decisive leadership change ahead of a crucial Ranji Trophy encounter, appointing Devdutt Padikkal as captain in place of Mayank Agarwal for the team's must-win Elite Group B match against Punjab, beginning January 29 in Mohali.

The decision follows Karnataka's defeat to Madhya Pradesh, a result that pushed the traditionally strong side to the brink of elimination despite entering the latter stages of the group phase as favourites. While Karnataka topped the table in the first phase, inconsistency across formats this season appears to have prompted the selectors to act.

Under Agarwal's captaincy, Karnataka won just two of their seven matches in the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy and exited the Vijay Hazare Trophy at the semifinal stage. With Agarwal's batting also failing to reach expected standards, the selection committee felt a change was necessary to free him from additional pressure.

"We feel that Mayank gets very involved in the team, and the captaincy responsibility is taking a toll on his batting," chief selector Amit Verma said. "He is a big-match player and very crucial for us at the top of the order."

Agarwal remains part of the squad and will continue to open the batting. Verma confirmed that the decision was communicated to Agarwal, adding that the opener is "in a good place" mentally.

# "Some time away, but when it's time, it's time": KL Rahul on retirement

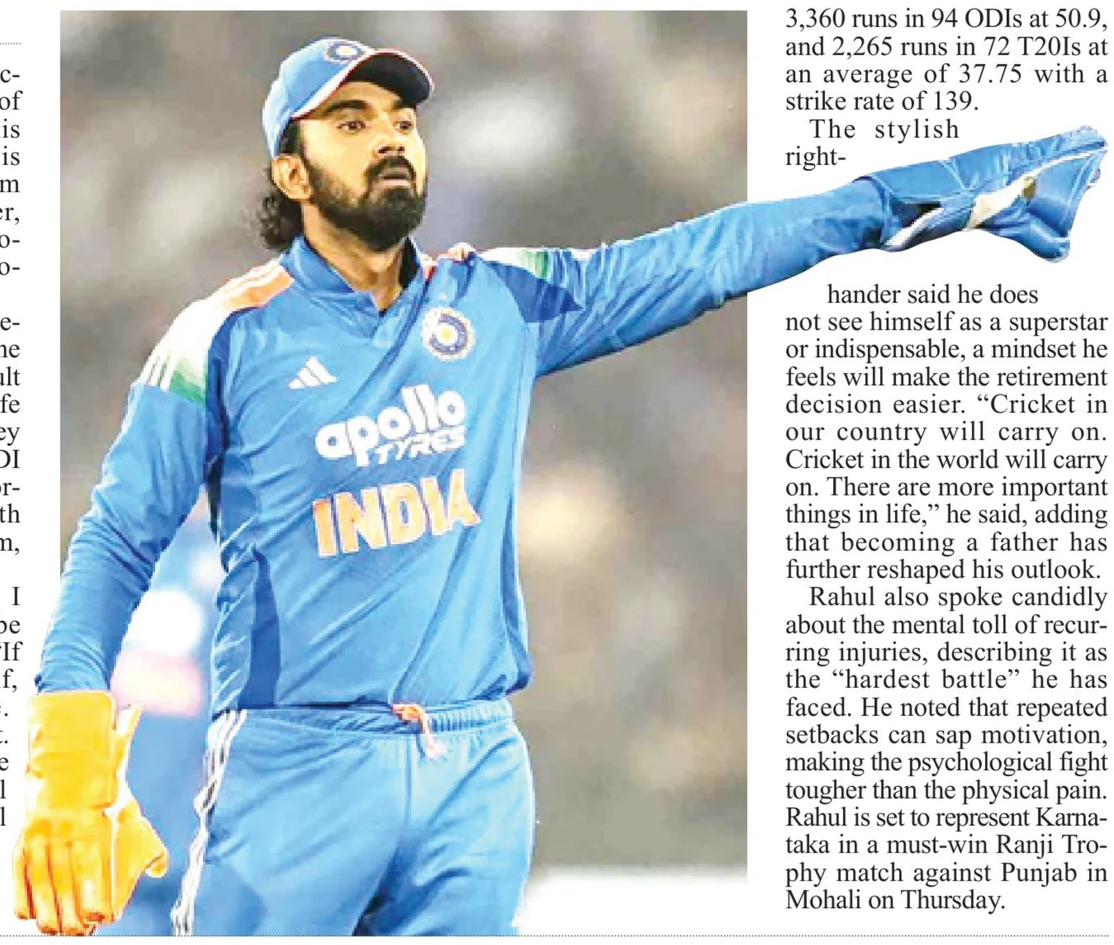
### India batter says perspective, family and injuries shape his calm outlook on future

**NEW DELHI**

India batter KL Rahul has acknowledged that thoughts of retirement have crossed his mind but stressed that he is still some distance away from calling time on his career, adding that he will not prolong his stay when the moment arrives.

The 33-year-old said he believes stepping away from the game would not be a difficult decision because there is life beyond cricket. Rahul, a key figure in India's Test and ODI sides, underlined the importance of being honest with oneself when assessing form, motivation and purpose.

"I've thought about it. I don't think it's going to be that difficult," Rahul said. "If you're honest with yourself, when it's time, it's time. There's no point dragging it. Obviously, I'm some time away." Rahul's international numbers reflect a successful career across formats. He has scored 4,053 runs in 67 Tests at an average of 35.8, 3,360 runs in 94 ODIs at 50.9, and 2,265 runs in 72 T20Is at an average of 37.75 with a strike rate of 139.



The stylish right-hander said he does not see himself as a superstar or indispensable, a mindset he feels will make the retirement decision easier. "Cricket in our country will carry on. Cricket in the world will carry on. There are more important things in life," he said, adding that becoming a father has further reshaped his outlook.

Rahul also spoke candidly about the mental toll of recurring injuries, describing it as the "hardest battle" he has faced. He noted that repeated setbacks can sap motivation, making the psychological fight tougher than the physical pain. Rahul is set to represent Karnataka in a must-win Ranji Trophy match against Punjab in Mohali on Thursday.

## With B'desh out of T20 WC, ICC reworks travelling media application process

**Withdrawal triggers review of accreditation norms amid revised schedules, quotas concerns.**

**NEW DELHI**

The International Cricket Council (ICC) is reworking the media accreditation process for Bangladeshi journalists seeking to cover the T20 World Cup in India following Bangladesh's withdrawal from the tournament, citing security concerns.

The move comes amid complaints from several Bangladesh-based journalists that their accreditation requests had been rejected by the ICC. Sources indicated that the governing body is reassessing applications due to a changed competitive landscape and altered schedules after Bangladesh opted out.

"There is a reworking of the process since there is a change in the number of requests and the schedules. The accreditation lists are being worked out accordingly," ICC sources told.

Around 80 to 90 Bangladeshi journalists had applied for accreditation to cover the global event. However, sources clarified that even when a national team participates in an ICC tournament, not all media applications from that country can be accommodated.

"If you go by country quota, you can't exceed the number beyond 40. The ICC goes by the recommendations of the home board and accordingly takes a call on applications," the sources added.

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) media committee chairman Amjad Hossain said the issue has been taken up with the ICC. "The decision came only yesterday and we have sought to know the details. An explanation has been requested. This is an internal and confidential matter, but to summarise, we wanted to know why this was done," Hossain told reporters in Dhaka.

It is learnt that Bangladeshi journalists will now have to submit fresh applications, which will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis under the revised process. The ICC has not yet provided a definitive timeline for completing the reassessment.

A senior Bangladeshi journalist expressed surprise at the development. "I have covered eight to nine ICC World Cups. This is the first time my application was rejected. We are awaiting clarity from the BCB before reapplying," he said.

According to the ICC's own assessment, the Bangladesh cricket team did not face a specific security threat in India. However, the BCB decided against travelling, prompting the ICC to replace Bangladesh with Scotland for the tournament, which begins on February 7.

## Bradman cap fetches record price at auction

**SYDNEY**

A baggy green cap worn by Australian batting great Sir Donald Bradman has fetched a record price at public auction, underlining the enduring fascination with cricket's most revered figure. The cap sold for A$460,000 at an auction in Melbourne, with the final amount rising to A$535,900 once a buyer's premium was added, making it the most expensive Bradman cap ever sold.

The sale eclipsed the previous record set in 2024, when another baggy green from the same 1947–48 home series against India was purchased for A$479,700, including the buyer's premium. Both caps date back to the final Test series Bradman played on Australian soil.

The cap auctioned this week was worn by Bradman during the 1947–48 Test series and later gifted by him to Indian all-rounder Sriranga Wasudev 'Ranga' Sohoni. Inside the cap are the handwritten inscriptions "D.G. Bradman" and "S.W. Sohoni", adding to its historical and sentimental value. Sohoni's family preserved the cap for decades after his death in 1993, before deciding to put it up for auction.

The buyer has requested anonymity, but auctioneers confirmed that the cap will go on public display at an Australian museum. Lee Hames, chief operating officer of Lloyds Auctioneers and Valuers, said the cap had been kept under strict care for generations. "That's over three generations under lock and key. If you were a family member, you were only allowed to look at it when you were 16 years old for five minutes," he said.

During Bradman's era, players were awarded a new baggy green for each Test series, unlike the modern tradition where a single cap is presented on debut and retained throughout a career. The 1947–48 series itself holds special significance. It marked India's first Test tour as an independent nation and Bradman's final series at home.

## Najmul Islam's return fuels unrest within B'desh camp

**DHAKA**

The Bangladesh Cricket Board's decision to reinstate controversial director M. Najmul Islam as head of finance has intensified discontent within the national team. Najmul was earlier removed on January 18 after senior players objected to his derogatory remarks, including comments on remuneration and criticism of former captain Tamim Iqbal. His swift reappointment, days after Bangladesh's removal from the T20 World Cup, drew sharp reactions from players, with one sarcastically calling it "good news," highlighting growing frustration and stress within the squad.

## Abhishek Sharma: India's 'cheat code' for T20I WC

**NEW DELHI**

To smash 68 runs off 28 balls is impressive. To do it without playing a single dot ball is almost unheard of. Abhishek Sharma achieved exactly that in the third T20I against New Zealand in Guwahati, delivering a statement knock that underlined why he is increasingly seen as India's ultimate T20I weapon.

Walking out after Sanju Samson fell for a golden duck, the left-hander showed instant intent, stepping out to loft his very first ball for six. What followed was carnage. Abhishek raced to a 14-ball half-century — India's second-fastest in T20Is — and reduced a 153-run chase to a formality, with India sealing victory inside 10 overs. His 20-ball stay included 12 boundaries, five of them towering sixes.

**Fearless opener's explosive starts give India decisive edge in high-pressure chases.**

Such brutality has become Abhishek's calling card since he took over the opening slot following Rohit Sharma's retirement in 2024. Since debuting shortly after India's T20 World Cup triumph in the Caribbean, the Punjab batter has redefined powerplay batting. He became the fastest to 1,000 T20I runs in terms of balls faced and boasts a staggering strike rate of 195.22, coupled with a healthy average touching 38.

His impact has gone beyond flat tracks. On sluggish UAE surfaces during the Asia Cup, Abhishek amassed 314 runs at a strike rate of 200, giving India decisive starts as others struggled. The team went on to lift the title unbeaten, despite misfiring tournaments from several senior batters.

Abhishek's rise was foreshadowed in the IPL, where back-to-back 400-plus run seasons at strike rates exceeding 190 made his India call-up inevitable after Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli stepped away from T20Is. Initial inconsistency gave way to maturity in 2025, aided by close work with mentor Yuvraj Singh, as he averaged 42 with five fifties and a century.

Aware of the risks inherent in his style, Abhishek accepts that failure will come. But with over 5,000 T20 runs already and a World Cup at home approaching, India's 'cheat code' seems perfectly timed to tilt matches — and tournaments — in their favour.

## Scotland hopeful of Indian visas ahead of T20 WC opener

**NEW DELHI**

Cricket Scotland chief executive Trudy Lindblade is confident that the national team will secure Indian visas in time for the T20 World Cup, despite heightened scrutiny for Pakistan-origin applicants. Scotland were drafted into the tournament following Bangladesh's withdrawal, even as the ICC maintained that there were no security threats in India. The Scots are scheduled to open their campaign against West Indies in Kolkata on February 7.

Lindblade said visa processing has been the board's primary focus over the past two days, with all players currently submitting applications.

"The visa piece is always slightly unknown, but we are working closely with the ICC and expect to be on the ground in India as quickly as possible," she said.

One of the key concerns involves pacer Safyaan Sharif, who has Pakistani heritage, a factor that can lengthen processing time. Lindblade said the ICC and BCCI have assured support within their areas of control.

## Bengaluru FC likely to play SC Delhi in Indian Super League opener

**BENGALURU**

Bengaluru FC are set to begin their Indian Super League campaign against debutants SC Delhi at the Sree Kanteerava Stadium, with the fixture tentatively scheduled for a 7:30 pm kick-off on February 15.

According to a provisional fixture list circulated by the All India Football Federation (AIFF) to potential commercial and broadcast partners, the match will be played on the second day of the much-delayed ISL season. The opening game of the season is expected to see champions Mohun Bagan take on Kerala Blasters at the Salt Lake Stadium in Kolkata on February 14, with a 5 pm start. On the same day, FC Goa are slated to host newcomers Inter Kashi at the Fatorda Stadium in a 7 pm kick-off. The fixtures remain subject to approval and possible changes by the participating clubs, with the AIFF clarifying that the schedule shared is tentative in nature.

For Bengaluru FC, who finished runners-up last season, the home calendar features several high-profile clashes. The Blues are expected to host defending champions Mohun Bagan on March 14 in a marquee encounter under the floodlights at Kanteerava. Southern rivals Kerala Blasters are scheduled to visit Bengaluru on April 11, with both matches pencilled in for 7:30 pm kick-offs.

## *India eye sparkling outing from spinners in 4th T20I against NZ*

**VISAKHAPATNAM**

With the five-match series already in the bag, a rampant India will look to iron out lingering bowling concerns when they take on New Zealand in the fourth T20I here on Wednesday, with particular focus on their underperforming spinners.

India's commanding 3-0 lead has largely been shaped by an explosive batting unit led by Abhishek Sharma, Suryakumar Yadav and Ishan Kishan. Their relentless strokeplay has often rendered the bowling effort secondary, masking the below-par returns from frontline spinners Kuldeep Yadav and Varun Chakravarthy.

Kuldeep has managed two wickets in two matches but has appeared far from his threatening best. The left-arm wrist spinner has conceded runs at 9.5 an over and endured a particularly expensive spell in the previous game, leaking 32 runs in three overs despite India restricting New Zealand to 153 for nine. His modest returns mirror his ODI series form, where he picked up just three wickets in as many matches at an economy of 7.28.

Chakravarthy, rested for the third T20I, has had a different challenge. He bowled in high-scoring encounters where New Zealand posted 190 and 208, but the mystery spinner too has lacked his usual sharpness. The break may help him regain rhythm, prompting the team management to consider whether to persist with Ravi Bishnoi, who impressed with figures of 4-0-18-2 in Guwahati, and possibly rest Kuldeep.

India will also monitor Axar Patel's fitness closely, with the all-rounder sidelined since the opening match due to a finger injury.

While bowling combinations remain a work in progress, India's batting has been breathtaking. Abhishek's strike rate has soared past 300, with Suryakumar and Kishan hovering around 230, as India chased 363 runs across the last two matches in just 25.2 overs.

New Zealand, meanwhile, have struggled to counter India's onslaught. Their bowlers have been expensive across the board, and unless they find answers quickly, another difficult evening awaits. The hosts, however, will hope their spinners step up to complete a near-perfect outing.

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